HESITATION;

OR,

TO MARRY, OR NOT TO MARRY?

VOL. III.

HESITATION;

OR,

TO MARRY, OR NOT TO MARRY?

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Far less dismay'd, Anchises' wand'ring son
Was seen the straits of Sicily to shun:
When Palinurus, from the helm descry'd
The rocks of Scylla, on his eastern side;
While in the west, with hideous yawn disclos'd,
His onward path Charybdis' gulf oppos'd.

FALCONER.

Non hic Centauros, non Gorgonas, Harpyiasque
Invenies: hominem pagina nostra sapit.

MARTIAL.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

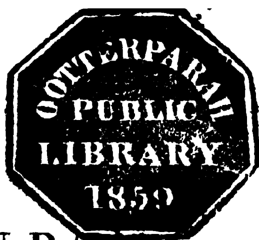
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HOURS
OF
HESITATION.

CHAPTER I.

" Jactor, crucior, agitor, stimulor,
Versor in amoris rotâ miser,
Exanimor, feror, distrahor, diripior,
Ubi sum, ibi non sum; ubi non sum, ibi est
animus."

PLAUTUS.

To the Earl of Montague.

" MY DEAR LORD,

" As communication between France and England has never been impracticable, I am at a loss in what manner to account for your persevering silence. You are aware, that when you sailed for England, my anxiety and uneasiness at

the situation of Grosvenor were inexpressible. Your silence confirms every alarming apprehension; he may be engulfed in the vortex — have rejected your counsel — have spurned at reproof — and have wearied even your friendship: — you hesitate to impart to me this terrible certainty — you would prepare me for the blow by this suspense, that it may fall less heavily; and, perhaps, I ought to thank your considerate friendship, instead of complaining of your neglect.

"Grosvenor is dear to me — dear as that son of whom the Almighty chastener deprived me! — I may say with the patriarch of old, 'if I am bereaved of him, I *am* bereaved!' — But if the afflicting hand of Heaven be laid thus heavily upon me, it is for me to bend in reverence beneath the pressure, and to say, 'not my will but thine be done!'

"Consider this, Lord Montague; I am *man, and made to mourn!* — I am a *Christian, and dare not repine!* — I have

wrestled with the avenging angel, and I have not been overcome! — I wait patiently — I can endure the worst without a murmur.

"We have no connection with any political faction, and we have lived in Paris unmolested. The allies are in France, yet we are tranquil; when this reaches you, I hope we shall be at Brussels. It is necessary for Miss Argyle, that a rapid succession of interesting scenes should be presented to her. She does not enjoy her usual luxuriance of health; the rosy bloom of youth is less vivid on her cheek. — Lord Montague — Lord Montague — should this be?

"It is essential to happiness that the most deliberate reflection should precede an event so incalculably important to man as *marriage*. But when fanciful theories and egotistical refinements usurp the place of reason and generosity, failure is a natural and deserved consequence.

"You have continually affirmed, that 'you would *found* an empire in the

female breast, and reign there exclusively; that you would never *succeed* to a sovereignty that had been engrossed by another!' — This sentiment is natural to a high and enthusiastic mind; a woman who can admit a *successor* to a first-love, is a being, whom I should be sorry to see the intimate associate of any female for whom I am particularly interested. But *you*, my lord, expect that this sovereignty should be *offered* to you:— not that it should be *yielded* to you in the conviction that yourself ardently desired it, and had assiduously endeavoured to impart a portion of a passion which already engrossed you — No! — it must be *voluntary* and determined on the part of the donor, and *you* are to be at liberty to accept or reject it, as inclination — perhaps, as caprice — prompts you!

"Miss Argyle's birth — beauty — accomplishments — and, above all, that indescribable fascination of her manner, of which you have sometimes spoken so

rapturously — have brought to her feet many men — countrymen and foreigners — noble and distinguished — inferior, perhaps, only to Lord Montague; and she has rejected them all, — instantaneously and unequivocally. What can render a young and deeply-feeling woman, thus cold and insensible to that passion which so many have endeavoured to excite in her, and which often, 'like the young of the desert-bird, is warmed into life by the eyes alone?' — Is it prepossession? — For whom? —

" Let me disguise nothing from you, my lord; if Isadora is *susceptible*, she has likewise energy sufficient to conquer an attachment which appears to be unfortunate in its object. The struggle in her heart has already commenced; she is indignant at herself for having admitted a preference which receives not the return it hoped and expected; it is this struggle between love and the highest, the most dignified pride that can be possessed by woman, that blanches her

cheek, and somewhat dims the lustre of her eye. — We may calculate with confidence on the result; Isadora will be victorious — and Lord Montague will, in vain, regret his too scrupulous hesitation! —

"Your letters, directed to Paris, will be forwarded to me. — I beg that you will not delay terminating my suspense.

"I am, my dear lord,

"Your very faithful friend,

"—— ——."

"*The rosy bloom of youth is less vivid on her cheek! — She does not enjoy her usual luxuriance of health!*" — said Lord Montague rapturously: — "precious words! — penned too, by him who never swerves from the very letter of fact! — She has rejected nobles, warriors; the world has been at her feet, and I — *I* am the object selected from the myriads there! — She *is* capable of enthusiasm, and it is for *me*; that sentiment which I

disdained to *compel* into existence, now spontaneously flourishes for me. Her *gratitude* has expanded into the fairest flower that blooms on this side heaven! — That one glance exchanged between us at Paris! — Blind that I was, not to perceive how much of rapture breathed in that glance! — *I* have awakened her enthusiasm — her love! — I may live on her smiles — may hang on her looks with ardour — discover in her glances a devotedness equal to my own! — I shall engross her hitherto unproved enthusiasm! — Shall breathe into life and refine that once dormant sensibility! — I am the object of a virgin love! — Ah heaven! — to enjoy these endearing convictions for one hour, would be cheaply purchased by a life of common-place feelings, and common enjoyments."

As Grosvenor was now completely extricated from the toils of the Lorn family, the cause which had occasioned Lord Montague's apparent neglect of his reverend friend, no longer existed. To

reach Brussels with all imaginable speed, was instantaneously resolved upon.

On this morning Grosvenor called on him by appointment; on hearing of this projected voyage, he instantly offered to be his companion.

"Lady Anne de Burgh," said he, "thinks it very becoming to persevere in her repelling coldness. — I am not quite willing to be the slave of any woman's caprice; — the moment a female suspects her power she becomes a tyrant; — in affairs of the heart, I am a complete republican, or a supporter of *limited monarchy*, at least: — under such a government, I am a submissive subject, but under a despotic one, I rebel — I throw off my allegiance — I seek a milder sovereign, and disengage myself from shackles that gall me."

"Would a monarch against whom you have once played the traitor, receive your renewed allegiance with unsuspecting confidence immediately on your reappearing, to offer it?"

"In that point the figure does not very well apply. — The circumstances of my case were peculiar."

"Lady Anne can have but one feeling on the subject; — *she has been deserted!* — A woman finds it hard to forgive an offence of this nature — more especially when by this desertion she is equalised with — is humbled beneath — a woman so incalculably inferior to her."

"When delusion is bliss, is it not folly to aim at discovering reality? — I believed that Lady Jane Lorn fondly, faithfully loved me, and I was happy! — Why did I seek to prove her incapable of any sentiment that was honourable? — What have I gained, but the loss of all those endearing attentions I was accustomed to receive from her, and which are so necessary to felicity?"

"And were you happy whilst receiving them?" demanded Lord Montague, with emphasis.

"Perhaps not; but my situation was not worse then than now."

"Grosvenor! — Grosvenor! — are the applause and the condemnation of your own heart equally indifferent to you? — Is not self-approval almost sufficient to insure happiness? — Is not self-condemnation certainly sufficient to constitute misery?"

"Forgive me; — I am petulant; — Lady Anne and her Countess have left the Richmond villa; — where they are gone I could not learn; — it is not a week since I saw Lady Anne, and she did not condescend to intimate, by a single word, her intention of quitting Richmond! — I am tired of my captivity — I will marry — an amiable woman — accomplished — beautiful. You smile, my lord; — I am not extravagant — I do not hope to meet a second Lady Anne de Burgh: — nevertheless, I am determined to marry, and to love my wife. — Lady Anne's coldness will never more

affect me — never — never! To join my uncle in France is an absolute duty; — change of scene will divert and occupy my mind. In short, my lord, I am ready to accompany you at a moment's notice."

"You are *trifling* with your happiness. — Since your escape from Lady Jane Lorn's thraldom, you have not frequently sought Lady Anne — you have never confessed your errors — you have never acknowledged to her that she alone can render your future life happy."

"*Acknowledge my errors* to the woman whom I wished to marry!" exclaimed Grosvenor impetuously; — "never! — What ought I to expect from my wife, whom, as my mistress, I had rendered my judge, but insubordination — contempt of me — an extraordinary valuing of herself! — No, no — Anne de Burgh must give me visible proofs of unextinguished preference, or — resign me — irrevocably — for ever!"

"*Insubordination!* — admirable analy-

sis of all you expect in married life! — At the foot of the altar, Grosvenor, both are equal; the woman vows obedience, in commemoration and punishment of committed sin; but an union, founded on high and noble motives, restores to them the bliss and the purity of Paradise; and subordination is a consequence of mutual and subsequent transgression."

"I shall go to France; — Lady Anne once rejected me — proudly and disdainfully; — a *second* time it would be insupportable! — No; — I demand from her expressions of tenderness for me, which I should never expect from another woman. — They only can bring me again to her feet."

It was evening when the vessel, which bore Lord Montague and Mr. Grosvenor from England, got under weigh. The wind was uncommonly favourable, and they rapidly made progress; but Lord Montague was continually chiding the tardiness of their motion; — he was tra-

velling to Isadora, to all from which he expected happiness on earth. No wonder then that the voyage appeared tedious; for love thinks no motion sufficiently swift, except that produced by the action of its own wings.

The night was transparently clear, and the heavens uncommonly brilliant. Never before had their beauty so exhilarated the heart of Lord Montague; never before had he contemplated them under circumstances so prosperous; — he had discovered the goal where his search after happiness was to terminate, and its attainment promised him the very perfection of human bliss.

Isadora — whose image was a beacon to point him to happiness — Isadora loved him! — What rapture that one sentence breathed! — his whole heart dilated to receive it; — it suggested ten thousand endearing combinations — ten thousand inexpressible felicities! — his soul had discovered its counterpart, and ardently longed to blend with it; — his whole

frame thrilled with transport; — he observed the translucent surface of the waters, agitated by the keel of the ship:—

" Bound where thou wilt, my barb! — or glide, my
prow! —
" But be the star that guides the wanderer, thou!"

he exclaimed rapturously.

Grosvenor overheard; — he continued: —

" Thou, *Isadora*, share and bless my bark;
" The dove of peace and promise to mine ark!—
" The evening beam that smiles the clouds away,
" And tints to-morrow with prophetic ray!—
" Soft — as the melody of youthful days. — "

" I fear I am wrong, my lord; — I am bad at poetry; — your lordship, I dare say, can correct me."

" You are thinking of Miss Argyle," said Lord Montague calmly; " the noble poet has it,

" Thou, my Zuleika."

" I am aware of it," replied Grosve-

nor; — "admire how readily I favoured your lordship's adoption."

"Indeed!" said Lord Montague abstractedly, continuing to gaze attentively on the sky; "it appears that Venus and Jupiter will speedily be in conjunction."

"I am not surprised," said Grosvenor archly.

Lord Montague continued his observations in silence; and Grosvenor, retiring into himself, wondered how he had dared to hazard *badinage* with such a character.

The nearer they approached to Brussels, the more acute became Lord Montague's impatience. To attempt a survey of the surrounding country was impossible; and throwing himself back into the carriage, he endeavoured to divert the tedium of the journey, by that train of delightful reflections which the certainty of being loved can alone inspire.

The carriage stopt; the door was opened; and in an instant Lord Mon-

tague was under that roof which sheltered Isadora.

She has witnessed his entrance;—agitated almost to fainting she flew to her own apartment. There, secure from interruption, she found relief in tears,—tears of mingled distress and delight. She heard the sound of his voice — she listened breathlessly, fearing to lose one tone of that voice, so deep, so melodious, so dear. It ceased — all was hushed into silence — but Isadora's ear faithfully repeated every sound; and the fancy, visionary as it was, soothed her.

"I am arrived," said Lord Montague to the Bishop, "no longer the hesitating and fanciful being you have hitherto known me, but ready to offer myself to Isadora,—to solicit her love—and to receive the boon with the most empassioned gratitude;—I regret, beyond expression, the hours already lost; let me not add another moment to them — suffer me immediately to see Isadora!"

"No, my lord; permit me to send

Mrs. Walworth to prepare her for the meeting."

"Not on any consideration," replied Lord Montague warmly; "let me enjoy the bliss of witnessing that interesting paleness, of which I have been the enviable cause — of beholding that agitation, which is alone wanting to confirm my hopes."

The Bishop yielded; — Isadora was summoned.

What an interval was that between this moment and her entrance!

Lord Montague's agitation was even more powerful than that which he hoped and expected to find in *her*. — The happiness of two lives hung on the next eventful moment; — a seal was to be affixed by both to a bond, which could never — never be cancelled!

The door opened, — Isadora entered.

With graceful ease, and polite friendship, she advanced to Lord Montague, and extending her hand with frank courtesy, congratulated him on his ar-

rival at a scene of such important business.

Lord Montague coldly received the extended hand,—and shrunk, almost shivering, from the touch.

The bloom of her cheek was such as Hebe's self might have envied;—the ruby of her lips mocked the bright rose that adorned her bosom;—and the brilliant lightning of her eyes, shamed the "jewels of Jamschid."

Lord Montague's hopes withered into nothingness; he execrated the credulity that had led him so fondly to believe that *he* had been able to thaw the impenetrable ice that surrounded her.—He internally compared the pale, interesting Isadora, his fancy had pourtrayed, with the blooming, brilliant Miss Argyle, who stood before him;—he compared, and he shrunk from the comparison.

The Bishop was beyond measure surprised at the graceful ease of her manner;—to encounter thus suddenly the

man for whom *he* had seen her melancholy and drooping; — for whom the bloom of her youth had been eclipsed by the deep shade of sorrow; — and to encounter him with such perfect and winning courtesy, that sat on her so naturally and became her so admirably, — exhibited a degree of self-command which he had believed impossible to her.

Neither he nor Lord Montague were aware that she had witnessed the entrance of the latter: — that she had expected their summons: — and had prepared herself for the ordeal, as the criminal collects all his fortitude to meet his doom undauntedly, willing to brave every thing, but the pity of the spectators!

The bloom of her cheek, and the brightness of her eye, were the hectic and radiance of feverish agitation; the only visible appearances of it, which she could not succeed in repressing.

But to endure this constraint long was

impossible, and she retired to seek the society of Lady Anne de Burgh.

For Lady Anne had accompanied the Countess du Chateau-vieux to France, and had been immediately sent by her to Brussels, to her friend Miss Argyle.

CHAP. II.

" There be none of beauty's daughters
With a magic like to thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lulled winds seemed dreaming.

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep;
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of summer's ocean."

LORD BYRON.

LORD Montague arose early the next morning, disappointed, angry, gloomy, and melancholy. He opened a window, and passing through a viranda, inhaled at once the breezes of a glowing summer's morning, and the perfume of a

luxuriant Provence rose, that bloomed beautifully in the vestibule of an arbour, gemmed by a thousand dew-drops which refracted the rays of the sun, and encircled each leaf, each bud, with a zone of the rainbow's dyes.

It is not in the heart of man to resist the influence of such a scene. Lord Montague stood to enjoy the perfume and the spectacle; to listen to the breathing melody of the groves, and to contemplate the smiling face of nature. Unmindful of the important crisis which agitated all Europe, each happy peasant cultivated the fertile earth, chanting some favourite national air; always gay and generally happy. Not a bird parted the ether whose wing was freer, or whose note was livelier than his; not a sun-beam darted from the heavens, that did not penetrate into his heart, and increase his animation.

Lord Montague approached the vestibule of the arbour; he gathered a bough of Provence roses, and shaking away the

balmy dew, approached the recess. — Issuing from it, with all the glow, all the heaven of a summer's morning beaming in her countenance, he encountered Isadora.

Never, never had she looked so lovely! The warm suns of the south had mellowed the rose on her cheek, into a hue, resembling the last radiance of a bright summer's sun. There was more glow, more bliss, breathing around her than ever; — she had acquired the very complexion of enthusiasm, with that fulness, that splendour, that soul-beaming expression of countenance, which finds instant way into the heart, and is *never* to be forgotten!

Lord Montague contemplated the effulgence of her beauty with a sentiment little short of adoration. He forgot to regret the absence of that paleness of countenance which he had pictured to himself as so interesting, so dear; — he saw, he thought of nothing, but the beautiful vision before him: one tint the

less had destroyed the illusion, and weakened the effect.

The ardour of his gaze deepened the glow of Miss Argyle's cheek, and added to the dazzling brightness of her eyes. He still held the bough of the rose-tree; her heart beat violently; — it seemed to say, Behold a divinity, clad in the leaves

> "*Of* the lote-tree, springing by ALLA's throne,
> "Whose flowers have a soul in every leaf!"

His appearance had fascinated her to the spot; she wished to retreat, but had lost the power; he approached, — he spoke; her breathing almost ceased, then in an instant became even audible; — he paid her the salutations of the morning in the words of a courtier, but his manner, his look, were those of a lover. He presented the branch to her almost silently, for a powerful emotion rendered his address to her inaudible; it was the loveliest rose that had ever bloomed on earth; enriched with the touch of Lord Montague — embalmed with the sigh of

the purest and most impassioned love that can affect mortality.

"I dare not apologise for my intrusion, Miss Argyle, lest you should remind me to depart," said he, recovering from his agitation, and drawing her arm through his. "In a scene like this, your meditations are of such a nature, that I may seek to penetrate into them without offending you. In a foreign land, a fine sky and a balmy air always remind us of our country; even though standing on a barren rock dashed by the sea, and sprinkled by its spray, we yet find something — a gale, a cloud, a sun-beam, a sigh of the wind — to bring the scenes of native valleys and native hills before our eye. With these, the idea of the friends from whom we are separated naturally associates itself; and Miss Argyle has, *must* have, many friends. This regret is the most delicious of which the soul of man is susceptible: if it be a pain, it bears so

near a resemblance to pleasure, that there are few sensations, even of rapture, for which one would exchange it."

"The feeling is delightful," said Miss Argyle; "but that which immediately succeeds it, is generally the most dreary that can possibly be imagined."

"True," returned Lord Montague, smiling: "it is like the gardens of Marbaa, in the midst of the barren soil of Mecca; the surrounding sterility renders them doubly delightful. How much an English scene differs from a continental one! In the well-disposed grounds of England, one scene rises naturally from another; here, every thing is arranged fancifully. There exists, perhaps, the same difference as between the Arabic and the classic orators; the latter always observe *method;* the former collect a vast quantity of full periods, acute proverbs, and brilliant imagery, which they string together with wonderful facility, and without the most remote connection. The circumstances,

under which we view any scene, always powerfully affect our impressions of it. The gardens of Mr. Walworth — Miss Argyle — Isadora — have you ever forgotten them?"

She looked at him for an instant. Her glance, *so* tender, *so* reproachful, *so* thrilling, seemed to demand, " if it were possible to forget that spot, which circumstances had rendered so interesting?" Lord Montague clasped her trembling arm more fondly. His eyes wandered over her person: she wore that fated robe of autumnal green, to which was attached the recollection of circumstances so important, so affecting!

" You are observing my dress," she said, blushing consciously on perceiving the direction of his gaze: " it reminds me always, that I am indebted to Lord Montague for a life —"

" Which it is Lord Montague's dearest wish may be blessed by every happiness under heaven! by all those dear affec-

tions that can alone alleviate the misfortunes incidental to humanity; by those intellectual enjoyments which can never be purchased by any thing but by an union with an object of kindred feelings, and equal capability for the refined pleasures of the soul!" he exclaimed, passionately interrupting her, and clasping the hand that reposed on his arm.

Surprised, agitated, almost overwhelmed, Isadora coldly, perhaps haughtily, withdrew it from his pressure. How often, when powerfully affected by an internal sentiment, do our actions appear to express the existence of a feeling directly opposite! Lord Montague, angry, disappointed, and unhappy, immediately withdrew his grasp, bowed, spoke something by way of apology, and slowly continued his walk.

What a change appeared in his countenance! A few moments since, and it was irradiated with the lustre of powerful intellect and high feeling: now, it was immoveably cold, and tranquil

even to apathy. It appeared as if a mist had suddenly obscured the brilliancy of the sun and of the heavens; as if gloom had displaced joy, and darkness succeeded to mid-day.

Isadora distressed, and anxiously desirous of recalling an action, the effect of absolute unconsciousness, was also mortified at the careless indifference with which Lord Montague scarcely retained the arm that still reposed on his: gently and silently she withdrew it.

"It is certainly oppressively hot, this morning; I am not surprised that you find it so," said Lord Montague calmly, affecting to place her action to the account of the heat.

Could she have penetrated his inmost heart at that moment, how different a man would have been displayed to her.

His whole soul was occupied by that sentiment which unnerves the hero, and animates the coward; which humbles the haughty and elevates the low; which warms the cold, and blazes like a

devouring fire in the heart of the enthusiastic; before which, every other earthly consideration sinks into the insignificance of an atom: without which life is a wilderness, the gayest scene a desert; with it, the wildest spot that ever deformed the face of nature, heaven! which flourishes in the most barren tracts; and which requires no culture to bring it to maturity. A plant, whose blossoms even the deadly breath of the simoom cannot blast! A flower, whose colours are rendered vivid by a sun of its own. A fairy paradise, which no external circumstances can ever deprive of its beauty, and where death never enters.

And this powerful sentiment engrossed the heart of him, who never, never harboured a light thought of *love!*

But Lord Montague writhed under that powerful agony, which is attendant on love alone.

Another moment had disclosed the

whole of his heart to Isadora; — another moment had irrevocably engaged him to her, or had separated them for ever! He was about to throw himself on her mercy — to confess his doubts, his fears, and his hopes; and she had chilled his ardour, had thrown his feelings back on himself; and, lest the first repulse should not sufficiently have declared this, had relinquished his supporting arm, a support, which even a casual acquaintance might authorise!

Then he recollected the latter part of the Bishop's letter, which had alluded to the struggle between Isadora's love and her pride: — "Yes; the conflict has terminated! She has been victorious; and *I* am the sacrifice! Be it so! Proud, lovely victor, enjoy thy triumph, *and be it so!*"

Lord Montague resumed his general manner. They passed a laurel-tree, clearly reflected in the smooth watery mirror that laved its root. "This place," said he, "is the epitome of those bless-

ings which peace ought to give; and the laurel proudly flourishes in the midst of it:

'C'est un champ fortuné, l'amour de la nature:
'La guerre avoit long-temps respecté les trésors
'Dont Flore et les zéphyrs embellissaient ces
'bords.
'Au milieu des horreurs des discordes civiles,
Les bergers de ces lieux coulaient des jours
'tranquilles,
'Protégés par le ciel et par leur pauvreté,
'Ils semblaient des soldats braver l'avidité,
'Et sous leurs toits de chaume, à l'abri des
'alarmes,
'N'entendaient point le bruit des tambours et des
'armes.'"

"It is a fine picture," said Miss Argyle, with an air of abstraction; "your lordship appears fully to appreciate the blessings of peace."

"I should abhor myself if I did not. There must be frenzy in the heart of that man, who can prefer war for itself alone. It is necessary and valuable only as it secures the blessings of peace. In

the most brilliant success, it ought never to be forgotten, that it is the most direful curse sent by Heaven to punish the transgressions of mankind!"

"Mercy," said Miss Argyle, endeavouring to pursue the subject, "is the sweetest flower that blooms in the conqueror's wreath: it is more durable than the laurel, and has the beauty and fragrance of the plant of peace."

"A disposition to be merciful, in the midst of slaughter, can be displayed with as little utility as a stalk of lavender flourishing in the Great Desert. It exists, indeed: but, alas! in the throng of battle, when Death multiplies himself into infinity, and sits on every sword that blazes there, *Mercy* may sink deep into the heart, but it is impossible to exercise it. The hand of man is lifted against man; the strife is that of death and victory!"

"It is astonishing that veterans speak of their campaigns, and of the number of their slaughtered enemies, with the

calmness and self-applause which I have frequently observed in them."

"They charge the homicide on their profession, whilst they monopolize all the credit due to approved courage. Have they never reminded you of the Mohamedan parable? Mussulmans believe that, at the last day, their prophet shall enquire concerning the manner in which they have spent their time; by what means they acquired their wealth, and how they employed it; how they exercised their bodies, and what use they made of the abilities that had been given to them. Every one will endeavour to lay his evil deeds on another, so that a dispute will arise, even between the soul and the body. The soul will say, 'My body I received from thee, for 'thou createdst me without a hand to 'lay hold with, a foot to walk with, an 'eye to see with, or an understanding to 'apprehend with, till I came and en-'tered into this body; therefore, punish 'it eternally, but deliver me.'—The

body, on the other hand, will apologize thus:—'Thou createdst me like a stock 'of wood, having neither hand that I 'could lay hold with, nor foot that I 'could walk with, till this soul, like a 'ray of light, entered into me, and my 'tongue began to speak, my eye to see, 'and my foot to walk; therefore, pu-'nish it eternally, but deliver me.'—They will be answered in the following parable:—'A certain king, having a 'pleasant garden, in which were ripe 'fruits, set two persons to keep it, one 'of whom was blind, and the other 'lame; the former not being able to see 'the fruit, nor the latter to gather it. 'The lame man, however, seeing the 'fruit, persuaded the blind man to take 'him upon his shoulders, and by that 'means he easily gathered the fruit, 'which they divided between them. 'The lord of the garden coming some 'time after, and enquiring after his 'fruit, each began to excuse himself; 'the blind man said he had no eyes to

'see with; and the lame man, that he 'had no feet to approach the tree. But 'the king, ordering the lame man to be 'set on the blind, passed sentence on, 'and punished them both.'—In the earlier part of my life, Miss Argyle, I was a soldier; then

'Little of this great world could I speak,
'More than pertains to feats of broils and battles.'"

Miss Argyle hoped that he would pursue this subject;—she was disappointed; he always carefully avoided egotizing;—if unavoidably compelled to speak of himself, his sentences had very little accent, and he said what was required in as few words as possible. Lord Montague never condescended to attract attention by much action: he considered an affectation of gesture unpardonable, and he knew that it is always perceptible. The most consummate affectation never resembles nature; it is harsh, stiff, and unattractive; it never imposes on a person of much observa-

tion, and rarely succeeds with the multitude. To cultivate and refine what nature has given to us, is allowable and indispensable; to affect what we have not, is contemptible and absurd. A man who excels in many things, is conscious that his *just* pretensions to fame are sufficient to obtain it, without the humility of simulation. To simulate, is always to humble ourselves: it implies a conviction, that we want something essentially necessary to reputation; and since we cannot attain it openly and honourably, we must adopt subterfuge and hypocrisy.

Lord Montague spoke on those subjects which might naturally be supposed most agreeable to Miss Argyle. He did not, with obtrusive and oppressive pedantry, compel into his service learned dogmas, and suffer them to burst on her, in one vast eruption. He threw out an idea in a manner simple and unpretending. If her mind seized it, and pursued it yet farther, he entered on it diffusely,

and always dismissed it exactly at the proper moment. Learning is certainly admirable, but it is most charming in the drapery of taste. A painter admires the muscles of the human body, but he never, for a moment, wishes that the absence of the "fleshly veil" would render them more perceptible.

"War is a subject ill adapted to this scene," resumed Lord Montague. "We should speak rather of the delights of Eden."

"Of the melody of the angel Israfil, and of the divine harmony proceeding from the clashing of the golden-bodied trees of the Mussulman's heaven!" added Miss Argyle. "I would not introduce such a subject in the most delicious scene in the universe, if I wished to receive pleasure from the prospect itself. Visions so splendid give a vapid appearance to the most pleasing realities; the languid eye rejects the beauties of the real world, for the splendour of the ideal. They are like the white almond blossom-

ing on naked branches, — rendering deficiency more perceptible, by placing before our imagination what is possible."

"There are some scenes, however, which cannot lose, and may gain, by the most splendid contrast; such, perhaps, as those shared by two that love equally and eternally. Solitude is generally, I think, unfavourable to external impressions. Is it not true, that

'If solitude succeed to grief,
'Release from pain is slight relief;
'The vacant bosom's wilderness
'Might thank the pang that made it less.
'We loathe what none are left to share —
'Even bliss — 'twere woe alone to bear;
'The heart once left thus desolate,
'Must fly at last for ease — to hate.
'It is as if the dead could feel
'The icy worm around them steal,
'And shudder, as the reptiles creep,
'To revel o'er their rotting sleep,
'Without the power to scare away
'The cold consumers of their clay!

'It is as if the desart-bird,
'Whose beak unlocks her bosom stream,
'To still her famish'd nestlings' scream;
'Nor mourns a life to them transferr'd;
'Should rend her rash devoted breast,
'And find them flown her empty nest.
'The keenest pangs the wretched find
'Are rapture to the dreary void —
'The leafless desart of the mind —
'The waste of feelings unemployed.—
'Who would be doom'd to gaze upon
'A sky without a cloud or sun?
'Less hideous far the trumpet's roar,
'Than ne'er to brave the billows more —
'Thrown, when the war of winds is o'er,
'A lonely wreck on fortune's shore,
''Mid sullen calm, and silent bay,
'Unseen to drop by dull decay; —
'Better to sink beneath the shock
'Than moulder piecemeal on the rock! —

"It is not probable, Miss Argyle," continued Lord Montague, with melancholy earnestness, "that *you* should ever *feel* how deeply these surpassing lines speak to the heart: he only who has felt this desolateness, whose energies have been benumbed by it, can appreciate their

full force. God grant, madam, that the sky which canopies your head, may never be that "without a cloud or sun,'—that you may never have cause to 'thank that pang' which only proves to the wretch on whom it is inflicted, that he can *feel*, and be wounded by it!"

They reached the house: Lord Montague sighed profoundedly, and Isadora, melancholy and unhappy, sought her apartment.

CHAP. III.

"But inborn worth that fortune can't control,
New-strung and stiffer bent her softer soul.
The heroine assumed the woman's place,
Confirmed her mind and fortified her face."

DRYDEN.

DAYS passed on, Lord Montague had resumed his usual manner, and his habitual attention to Miss Argyle. Yet every hour strengthened the impression each had received of the other.

"Lord Montague," said Lady Anne de Burgh to Miss Argyle, "is the only man I ever knew who towers in such evident and almost incredible superiority over others, without being generally disliked."

"He is indeed an extraordinary being," said Miss Argyle, sighing; "every one who knows him must be

aware of the impossibility of doing justice by description to the rapidity of his thoughts, which glance, like lightning, from object to object, remote as the sun from the earth; — to the quickness of his conceptions, the justness and accuracy of his remarks, the elegance, the facility, and the perspicuity of his eloquence; and the patient, but never-oppressive dignity of his silence. These are qualities which distinguish him so remarkably from all others, and which elevate him so high above their level. In all he says, either the grandeur of his soul, or the brilliancy of his genius is displayed. He converses on the most important subjects, with the ease of a man to whom nothing appears difficult. And he discusses trifles with a playful dignity, which seems to elevate the subject to his level, and to give it an impressiveness of which it was never before imagined capable."

"You panegyrize *con amore*," said Lady Anne, half smiling, half astonished.

"Simply with justice, my dear Lady Anne," returned Miss Argyle; "it is impossible to speak of a character like Lord Montague's with indifference. It would be as impracticable for a woman to converse on such a subject with coldness, as for an Englishman to mention Magna Charta or the Bill of Rights without enthusiasm. We must admire Lord Montague; admiration is a tribute due to him. In the unhappy affair of Mr. Grosvenor, his character has been displayed in action. Every thing he undertakes, appears effected by magic. Impossibilities vanish at his voice; difficulties, at his touch, crumble into dust: and *facility* seems to have personified itself, and to hover continually over him."

Miss Argyle coloured deeply; she had inadvertently betrayed more minute observance of Lord Montague, than was consistent with the indifference with which her pride demanded that the world should suppose she regarded him. And

the idea that *she* would become an object of *pity* — of *pity* to the world — was attended by a pang scarcely less acute than that which the conviction of his indifference continually inflicted on her.

For every hour she passed in the society of Lord Montague contributed to confirm and to strengthen her preference; and with her love — as his perfections became more perceptible to her, as his high talents were more admired by her, as the pre-eminence of his mind was more completely displayed — increased her persuasion of the impossibility of her ever attaching him exclusively. But Lord Montague knew not the sleepless agony of her nights, the bitter tears she shed in solitude, that recklessness of all that had used to interest her, which can spring from no source but the misery of the heart; the darkness of the future that appeared to her, the gloom of the grave, the prison of madness, or the sternness of apathy! He saw her blooming, brilliant, and happy: into

lerable is that sickness of heart induced by the necessity of shrouding the worm that gnaws within, by the smile of indifference or the laugh of gaiety.

Desirous that that sentiment should be impervious to Lady Anne, which it were madness to think that *one* individual suspected, Miss Argyle arose with assumed calmness, and, on pretence of seeking a book, quitted the apartment.

Lady Anne was soon absorbed in meditation, but not on her friend, not on Lord Montague; no, dearer and more intimate interests engrossed her; — Grosvenor's yet existing engagements to *herself;* his subsequent engagement to Lady Jane Lorn; the delinquency of that family; and the still deep interest the manner in which he spoke of Lady Jane evinced he felt in her — by turns occupied her attention.

It appeared to her, for she had never heard the whole affair detailed, that Grosvenor's present melancholy arose from the conflict between his passion for

Lady Jane, and his pity for her own evident unhappiness, of which he was obviously the cause, —that pity heightened too by a sense of *honour*, which seemed imperatively to prescribe the path he was to pursue.

Lady Anne had imbibed a portion of Miss Argyle's haughty contempt of *pity*: *pity* from him she loved so hopelessly and so well, was humiliating beyond every other consideration. To become his wife only from his pity and scrupulous honour:—far, far better to live in the solitary gloom of celibacy for ever.

This conviction had scarcely arisen in the mind of Lady Anne, when Grosvenor entered the apartment.

The train of ideas in which she had indulged, had given additional brightness to her large and "languishingly dark" eyes. A deep carnation flushed a cheek to which it had long been a stranger, and imparted fire to a countenance, which the finest drooping eye-lids in the world generally shaded with melting softness.

It was not to the Tudor union of complexion that Lady Anne owed her loveliness; for her's was deep as if it had glowed under the touch of a tropical sun. And never, perhaps, had its beauty been so apparent as at this moment.

Grosvenor looked at her for an instant with melancholy earnestness; but chiding his gaze, he rapidly withdrew it, and prepared to quit the apartment.

The voice of Lady Anne retained him. "Mr. Grosvenor — stay, I request you, a few minutes?"

The carnation was more vivid, and the fire of the eye more determined. The elevation of her brows also contributed to give her Miss Argyle's cast of countenance; and the dignified composure of her expression awed, whilst it astonished Grosvenor.

She motioned him to be seated. He obeyed. Her voice, for an instant, trembled; but gradually recovered its usual tone, or was elevated into one more forcible.

"I am concerned, Mr. Grosvenor," she began, "to observe, that my presence always appears to excite disagreeable associations in your mind; and that, consequently, you are always eager to escape from it."

Lady Anne paused, rather to regain her voice, than in expectation of any reply from Grosvenor.—He sat silent and embarrassed.

"My observation, Mr. Grosvenor," she resumed, "has not been confined to a day or to a week. The gloom of your countenance has *long* been apparent to me. I am anxious to dissipate that gloom. I think I do not deceive myself, when I believe that I am perfectly acquainted with the cause of it. When you first became an actor on this theatre of the world, you looked around for an object to whom you might impart your feelings; on whose affection, your heart could anchor; whose participation would elevate your enjoyments, and alleviate your cares; and whose tenderness and

soothings would relieve your toil, and recompense the severity of your public exertions. *I* was that being, Grosvenor: —*I* was selected by you; and I taught myself to believe, that henceforth my happiness or misery was irrevocably dependent on your's.

"Alas! Grosvenor, you were scarcely more deceived when you imagined that you had found in me that being, on whom you were to depend for felicity; for whom you would be content to endure all the misfortunes incidental to humanity; and with whom joy was to receive a brighter tint, and misfortune was to be shadowed into invisibility!

"*Did* not you imagine all this, Grosvenor? The hours when this vision occupied us, are to me 'the morning-star of memory.' Their bloom and their loveliness yet live in my remembrance; and though that brilliant period was but the delusive meteor of a moment, we were unconscious of its fleetingness;

— we shared, we enjoyed the prospect, and we *were* happy!"

"Anne, — Lady Anne, — dearest Lady Anne," began Grosvenor.

"Suffer me to proceed: — I need not recall to your mind, the event which separated us at Bath. I am not going to apologise in any manner — least of all, to *you* — for the pride which dictated my refusal of you at that place. Grosvenor, you *condescended* to imposture; and though it deprived you of your natural brightness, instead of lending you artificial brightness, you yet deserved humiliation.

"You were offended, and I suffered; but let that pass: we met again; again we inhaled the balmy breath of happiness; and then our engagement was formed."

Lady Anne paused for an instant; she dashed away a tear that *would* not be restrained; but recovering herself by a powerful effort,

——————" The dark of her eye,
" At once took a darker, a heavenlier dye;"

and she resumed.

" Of the present state of my own feelings I will say *nothing*. I did not, Mr. Grosvenor, solicit your attention, that I might speak of *myself*. I desire, Sir, neither your compassion nor your admiration. I am not going to harangue on sentiment, or to declaim on duty: it is my purpose to relieve *you*; on no other subject *have I the shadow of a claim to be heard by you.*

" Of my own feelings, then, I will *not* speak. Your's, I know, are changed. You have discovered an object more worthy of your love; whose superior talents and accomplishments more nearly assimilate with your own. Can any thing be more natural or more rational than that, under such circumstances, you should regret the precipitancy of that earlier choice, which, from your sense of honour, seems to bind you to another? — Hence arises your uneasiness.

"'Though the enthusiastic and passionate ardour with which you once regarded me has subsided, your heart still retains the trace of it.

"Love and honour are opposed in your bosom; and their conflict renders you miserable."

Lady Anne's countenance and voice were affected, at this moment, by unusually elevated and melancholy firmness. The slow motion of her upraised eye; the long ebon lashes, almost resting on a brow arched as the bow in heaven; the loose curls of her soft black hair, now shading her forehead, and now parting and displaying its beauty—gave a dignified loveliness that was admirably adapted to the situation in which she was placed. It penetrated Grosvenor's heart—never had he seen her so attractively beautiful, never had he heard her so eloquent, so bewitchingly dignified. In the bitterness of his soul, he *cursed* that being, whose enchanting influence, whose powerful and artful fascinations, had

inflicted a pang on her who lived only for his happiness — had, perhaps, divided them for ever!

"Grosvenor," she resumed, "I would terminate this conflict — I would reconcile these contending sentiments; they result from a false estimate of my character and my wishes. My aim is your happiness, and you do me injustice, if you suppose, I would hesitate to make any sacrifice, that might conduce to it. Since *another* can constitute your felicity, since you prefer being indebted to *another* for it — I do not *entreat*, I COMMAND you, Sir, to leave me! In *this* instance I claim to be sole arbitress. Do you suppose, that *I* would restrain the freedom of your choice? Do you suppose, that *I* shall appeal to your justice, your honour, and await the triumph of these feelings over your affections, passion, heart? Do you suppose, that *I* should be satisfied with a pre-eminence granted to me by these cold sentiments only? Oh, no! you cannot err so

widely! It is I, who have been mistaken, and your conduct is but the result of that mistake. I was weak to intrust my happiness to the steerage of so youthful, so inexperienced a pilot: no wonder that when he had gained strength, and power, and energy from weathering the rougher gales that disturb life's ocean, he despised the conduct of so humble a vessel; and sought to be helmsman to one more gallantly trimmed, and whose weight and consequence might render his safe guidance of her more important, more necessary, and more desirable. Waste not your thoughts then, Grosvenor, on this humbler sloop, whose own sails will be sufficient to waft her to some port; but, oh! for your own happiness, pilot well that majestic vessel that sails so proudly; *she* would be grounded in a sea, in which the other might press on with safety!

"Whilst I pity, and, as far as regards myself, *disdain* the struggle that convulses you, I cannot but admire the feelings that prompt it. I know, that

you would prefer death to dishonour; but your judgment is not infallible, and the conviction that the *heart* is not to be controlled, is not *new* to me. And you would not *dare*, Grosvenor, to tender *me* a heart that owned another sovereign? To what should I owe it? To *justice?* My declaration that our engagement is null and void, now, and for ever, supersedes *her* claims! To *pity?* I *despise* it, reject it indignantly! Do not suppose that my energies are young as my years; the experience, the trials, the events of a few months, have given them maturity; and if they *are* to wither sooner for their premature ripeness, the *present*, Grosvenor, is not the hour! To *honour?* Is it not possible, that, in the intercourse of society, I too might have entered the sphere of a being, whose character, elevated and grand, might have occasioned deep regret for my early engagement to yourself? I appeal, Grosvenor, to your feelings *as a man*, whether this possibility did not exist? *You* cannot — *woman*, only, can — feel,

that a first unfortunate attachment is never to be succeeded by another: *her* heart is like the food of the Brahmins, to be despised and cast away, when touched by another than by him, who, by being the first to affect it, became its hallowed divinity for ever. And if the conviction that you love another, Grosvenor, proves to me a weakness in you, the existence of which I did not suspect, at least it was a *weakness of your nature*, and not a *dereliction from honour*; — Honour demanded from you only an open and honourable avowal of the change, time and circumstances had wrought in you; honour demanded, that you should dispel, in a moment, the vision that hovered round me, and awake me to the reality of my situation. You did not act thus; and 'therein you have offended.'

"Did you think, Mr. Grosvernor," continued Lady Anne, smiling indignantly, "that I should endeavour to obtrude myself perpetually on your notice,

follow you like an injured ghost, or seek the world's commiseration by loudly lamenting your inconstancy? I entreat you to know me better; if I do not *venerate* your character, I at least respect the motives which detain you near me, and there is no earthly reason, why I should not be *your friend.*"

Grosvenor was deadly pale; for the last few minutes he had buried his face in his hands; he now raised it; his eyes swam in all the painful brightness of tears. Lady Anne observed him, and resumed;—

"Nay, Grosvenor, pity not *me;* consider, for a moment, how much happier is my present situation in being enabled by my resignation of you to contribute to your felicity, than if our engagement had been completed;—if I had been united to you only to witness the agony, the sufferings, your separation from the object of your maturer choice would naturally entail on you. You could not have blinded me to the reality of your

situation: not only are the eyes of her who loves quick in discovering the minutest sensation that affects her object—and to have loved you *then* would have been equally my duty and my choice—but *you* are bad at deception; for, believe me, your heart is ill calculated to pourtray a sentiment it does not feel. It would have been impossible, that you should regard me otherwise than as the only obstacle which had prevented your enjoyments; whilst fancy would have painted, in the most attractive and brilliant colours, the beauties, the graces, and the perfections of that being you had resigned.

"Grosvenor," said Lady Anne, rising with dignity, and extending her hand, displaying in that attitude the inimitable proportions of her form, "I would again see you happy, I would again witness your gaiety illuming that circle which is blest with your society. Go then to the chosen object of your love; and if, perchance, she is aware of my existence,

and of my claims on you; if these convictions have inflicted on her the agony inseparable from them, relieve her, restore her to happiness: tell her that Anne de Burgh resigns you; that for her, you are at this moment free, free as air, unshackled as the bird who skims the wave, or sings at the gate of heaven! Be happy: if the prayer of affection may hope to ascend on high, you will be blest, even beyond the summit of the bliss of mortality!"

"Anne — Anne de Burgh — Lady Anne — loved! — dearest! — hear me — pity me — hear me for a moment," exclaimed Grosvenor, almost inarticulately.

But Lady Anne found that the spell, which had imparted courage and supported resolution, was dissolved. Her eyes swam in tears; her lips trembled and were pale; a thousand pulses beat at her heart. Disengaging her hand from his pressure, she signed from him with the heroic, self-devoted air of that Spartan matron, who commanded her son, either

to bring back his shield from the battle, or to be carried back upon it.

Grosvenor appeared instantly deserted — lone — his hopes blighted — his vacillation punished — and his separation from Lady Anne eternal. The unequivocal assurance of her preference, on which he had formerly insisted, had indeed been given; but that event, which he had intended should be the date of his happiness, had become a consummation of misery. He was separated from a being who loved him with ardour, and for *himself* alone: he had proved that his fortune, and the advantages which his connection would produce to her family, were the sole ties that attached Lady Jane Lorn to him. He had witnessed the devotion of one, equal to himself in rank, transcendant in beauty, and possessing an elevation of soul, the attainment of which was impossible to Lady Jane, by reason of the intricacies of her character. Never before had the two been so completely contrasted;

never had Lady Anne been displayed in so brilliant a light; never had Lady Jane sunk into such a depth of shade.

"No, dear Lady Anne," he exclaimed mentally, "it is not only woman who can feel that a first unfortunate attachment is never to be succeeded by another; — man, too, can *love but once;* — and however the delusions of fancy may, at different periods, affect him, when his heart has *once* found its home, whatever may be its occasional lapses, it will yet recur to the one object whom it loved; — to the being who alone can elevate it to the sublimest happiness, or plunge it into the profoundest misery."

The conviction, that he was still dear to Lady Anne, gleamed for a moment over the darkness of his future prospects; but, alas! it only displayed to him more clearly the horrors attending his apostacy.

CHAP. IV.

"Some have, at first for wits, then critics past—
Turned authors next, and proved plain fools at last."
POPE.

LADY Anne carefully avoided Grosvenor. With unwearied assiduity he endeavoured to attract her attention, but all his efforts were successless. Lady Anne had discovered the path which pride and delicacy bade her to pursue; and it was not the sight of the depression of the man who had injured her, that could induce her to swerve from it.

"You act, Lady Anne," said Miss Argyle, "with a dignity and firmness that ought always to distinguish the female character. Believe me, at this moment I venerate you; and the more so, because, perhaps, I feel acutely the peculiar embarrassment and cruelty of your situation. I avow that I *dislike*

Lady Jane Lorn; but this prejudice will so completely blind me. I confess, that sun appears to me talented, brilliant, and dazzling beyond women in general; even beyond those in the higher walks of life. These talents, this brilliancy, attracted and fascinated Grosvenor; it was scarcely possible that one so young, and thrown too continually within their sphere, should escape them; and trust me, Lady Anne, unless she has been a defaulter from principle, their influence must be eternal."

"I feel that it must," replied Lady Anne. "I confess to you, my dear Miss Argyle, that it was long before I could bring my mind to argue dispassionately on this point. When I did gain sufficient calmness, delicacy, pride, honour, imperatively prescribed my path. *Humble* I allow myself; I hope I am, nevertheless, too elevated to enter the lists with any woman, who may be the *subsequent* preference of my lover. I would not restrict the freedom of his

choice; but I consider that he owes it to me, that my successor shall not be *inferior* to myself; and I demand from him an immediate avowal of the alteration in his sentiments."

"On this point, your judgment is my own," returned Miss Argyle; "I would abhor, I would shun that indelicate, contemptible, unfeminine character, who would persecute a lover to fulfil his engagement with her from a *principle of justice*, which the feeling of his heart could never sanction. It would be presumptuous, perhaps, in me, to censure the verdicts which so many of my countrymen have given, in actions for breach of promise of marriage. I am not an advocate for the levity of character, which must be inherent in that man, who could ever subject himself to such an action; but there are a thousand circumstances to extenuate it. In general, the extreme youth of the parties, of the defendant more particularly, at the time such engagements were formed,

pleads powerfully for him: with his years, his mind and his heart expand; and it is highly improbable that the object of juvenile passion should possess those powerful qualities, his superior knowledge of the world demands: and it seems cruel and unjust, that he should be compelled to pay so heavy a penalty for that which was but imprudence and inexperience at most. But the woman, who suffers herself to be presented to the gaze of the multitude, as a deserted, miserable wretch, praying for pity and pecuniary compensation,—if it were possible, I would exclude her from the society of all for whom I was interested with scrupulous severity. Happily, in our rank of life, such instances are extremely rare; they are confined generally to that class of society, which we call *mediocre.* I cannot avoid saying, with an eminent counsellor employed in such a cause, '*Rather than suffer a sister or a daughter* '*of my own to bring such a case under* '*the cognizance of a jury, I would see*

'*her in her grave!*'—What must be the result of a compulsive marriage? Indifference or abhorrence on the part of the husband; misery, perhaps faithlessness to the very man she wronged so cruelly in the first instance, on the part of the wife."

"There appears a degree of bravery, I will not call it *courage*, in Lady Clervaux's elopement with Lord Percival Lorn; a defiance of the world's odium and neglect, for which I never gave her credit," said Lady Anne.

"If such odium and such neglect were, indeed, the inseparable attendants of this crime, I should imagine, that the accuracy of your calculations on Lady Clervaux's character, would have been proved by the result. Unfortunately for the welfare of society, a *divorcée*, married to her seducer, is received again into circles whence she ought always to be excluded. The respectable part of our fashionable world, indeed, shut their doors against her, but

these characters form by much the smaller portion of it. Lady Clervaux will still associate with her former friends — for you need not be told, Lady Anne, that these were they of the lowest principles,—she will continually meet her former husband in society, and always with civility! I heard Mr. Grosvenor say, that it was ascertained that she and Lord Percival Lorn are living together in Ireland; that Sir Thomas has obtained a divorce; and that a suit for damages was pending when he quitted England."

Grosvenor, at this moment, entered with an open letter in his hand. His countenance shone with happiness; his bright and beautiful eyes flashed rays of fire; and the curl of his peculiar and inimitably fine mouth indicated no slight internal satisfaction.

"I fear I intrude," he said; a slight emotion affected his usually clear and powerful voice; — he inclined to recede.

"By no means," said Miss Argyle, signing to him to be seated.

"Have I your permission, Lady Anne?" he asked, advancing slowly, and somewhat timidly, to that side of the table on which she sat.

"You will certainly take advantage of Miss Argyle's," said Lady Anne, with perfect politeness.

He drew a chair near her's, and, with a heightened complexion, said,—

"I have just received a letter from our common acquaintance, Surrey; if you will allow me to read it to you, I think I can promise you some amusement, at least."

"I remember deriving a good deal from a composition of his, with which it was Mr. Walworth's good fortune to be honoured. I desire nothing better than a similar one, *pour passer le tems*," said Miss Argyle.

Grosvenor looked at Lady Anne; she bowed assent; he smiled; Lady Anne shrunk from that smile; it

seemed to speak of triumph, an exultation which, at this moment, when her previous conversation with Miss Argyle had forcibly brought to her recollection every circumstance that had occurred during her acquaintance with him, seemed peculiarly unmanly and insulting.

Grosvenor, if he observed the more than usual coldness which his smile had produced on her countenance, did not notice it; he read Surrey's letter, thus:—

— "Never knew such a whim in my life, my dear boy, as that which led you from England before the birth-day. France bad place just now; — no jollification, — all *à-la-mort*; — nothing but soldiers, and that sort of canaille.

'Is the hurly-burly done?
'Is the battle lost and won?

Could not exist near you, for the world. Suppose you'll hear many confoundedly good stories: send them to me, will you? Terribly in want of something new: can't talk much though,

now. Present fashion devilish bad for making one short of breath, and that sort of thing. Talking of good stories — harkye; — all a secret, though — promised it; — nevertheless, can't resist the opportunity of obliging you, as I know you are hunting wonders in the strange animal, man. I think, you will confess, I send you rather a curious specimen of the species.

"You may remember a valet I once had, who got into a terrible scrape at Genoa, and fled, frightened out of his wits, into Holland. This fellow, it seems, after some time, entered into the service of old Doctor Y——, the reviewer; and having a good deal of leisure, — (by the by, I wish I had, but always confoundedly busy, never a moment to spare; enough to kill a man of moderate constitution, I am certain;) — but, as I was saying, the fellow having a good deal of leisure, and constant access to the luminous workshop of the doctor, picked up such a smattering of the trade, that, on

the old gentleman's decease, he bravely resolved to carry on the business for himself. Like the courage of the man, must confess,—finest quality our sex possesses, and an admirable and certain mark of our natural superiority over the other. The Doctor, I hear, had been long employed on a translation of some classic fellow;—bad at remembering the names of those antiquated people;—but the genius of his author having escaped in the process, the *caput mortuum* only of his meaning was precipitated upon the reader, after it had undergone a change similar to that of smoke on becoming soot. Nevertheless, the Doctor was extremely partial to this sort of amusement, and had been employed half his life, like a Lincolnshire wind-mill, in grinding the mud from one channel into another. My brave valet made his *debut* by publishing this translation as his own; and reviewing the performance himself, he did not fail to applaud the talents of the author, in

a high style of panegyric. He has lately succeeded in marrying a woman of some property; — good speculation that — not confined to my *ci-devant's* rank of life, by any means. Last week I encountered him by accident; — congratulated him on the amendment of his appearance, — a thing of course, that, you know. He asked me, very civilly, to do him the honour to take a dinner with him. Rather stared at the fellow's impudence, at first; but a few reflections on the constant rotary motion of life checked my rising choler, so accepted his invitation. Good deal pleased, you know, and did not presume on my condescension, so that he is not altogether deficient in natural sense. (*Mem.* — he has the best claret I ever tasted; — change my wine-merchant.) Received me, of course, with superabundant politeness; — can't quite sink the valet. His lady (who, by the by, has the advantage of about five and twenty years over her literary spouse) had selected her poultry, I believe, on

the same terms that men are chosen for the militia, taking those only between eighteen and forty-five. The infernal woman pressed me to eat of it with as much importunity, as the village Jesuit who sold them could possibly have used in persuading their purchase. A cursed bore, all this, — worse than the mob on a chairing day. After dinner, thought it a good joke to enter on the topic of his profession, to which, by the by, he seemed nothing averse.

" 'You wonder, sir, I dare say,' said he, ' to see me exercising with such success a function for which you must be aware I am very ill qualified.' I told him I thought it a confounded good thing he had had courage sufficient to engage in it, —nevertheless, was certainly surprised to find him a REVIEWER! The fellow laughed heartily —cursedly vulgar and plebeian, — begged my pardon, and began to explain, verbatim, thus:

" 'When old big-wig gave up business,' said he, alluding to the decease of the

doctor, 'I understood in what manner to proceed, nearly as well as did any of my cotemporaries. Indeed, our system is very simple. I seldom say any thing concerning a book, either for or against, without being first paid by one party or the other. It seems natural for a critic to prey upon an author, though there has sometimes been a melancholy instance of our quarrelling amongst ourselves, and, like lobsters in a basket, endeavouring to bite off the claws of each other.

" 'When an author waits upon me, I present him with this volume, which contains a collection of complimentary critiques, rising gradually above each other, according to their different prices. Thus you see, that this one, for instance, which only congratulates the author '*on having treated a difficult subject with clearness, and fully justified the opinion the public had formed of his powers,*' is only marked 3l.; whilst this, which speaks of '*genius, deep research, and perspicuous*

argument,' is marked 8l. Here is one which relates to poetical performances, and compares the author to '*Homer, Virgil, Dante, Milton, or Shakspeare, and declares his genius to rival the highest efforts in existence*;' this is marked 12l. The author has only to make his choice, pay his fee, and in due season forth comes my opinion. If I am employed to run down the work, I have a set of old jests on the subject, which I revive as the occasion demands, and by interlarding them occasionally with a Latin scrap, I contrive often to mix up a pill very unpleasant to the palate of the author; when very possibly I know little or nothing about his subject.

" 'With regard to *voyages and travels,* I adopt another plan. I make all my assertions in the first person;—a fly upon the map does not pass over rivers, seas, and mountains, with more ease; and when it is my province to contradict the author, I always make a point of doing so from my own personal experience;

although, perhaps, I never heard of the country he describes, until his book was published.'

"Devilish good this, was it not?—amused me infinitely;—forgave the bore of the dinner;—determined to hear more, so asked him, whether he was ever involved in an unpleasant altercation with the author he had abused.

"'Why, sir, I very much doubt, whether all the authors in existence could put me down, if they were to unite their talents for that purpose. Admitting their success for a moment, *faction*, sir, *faction*, in England, is always a refuge for the destitute. If the defects of my character were as numerous as state-pensions, and their existence as indubitable as the necessity of a loan*;—if the incessant yell of such an infernal minority *should* drive me from the elevation of my critical tripod, I would wish no more than to identify my cause with either party;—the bigots would reward me as a martyr; and possibly, under such cir-

cumstances, I might receive more from a slight effort of hypocrisy, than from the continued exertions of my present occupation. Besides, suppose that my hopes were driven from this intrenchment, I should still have a *dernier ressort*, — I could but turn patriot, edite a newspaper, or go to America.

" 'Besides you forget, sir,' said he, 'that I am all this time unknown; I am but a rifleman in this warfare, and employed in bush-fighting. Were I publicly to avow what I write, it is very possible, that the known humility of my pretensions, would completely neutralize the venom of my pen. I was, it is true, once unfortunate in a similar way. You must know, on my debarkation from Holland, I was associated with a friend in a little astrological speculation;—we calculated nativities, published predictions in the almanacs, and settled the weather for the year ensuing. The late eccentric Lord ——, hearing of our fame, and be-

ing then on the eve of a matrimonial affair, waited upon us to cast his nativity: after much turning over of books, I very gravely assured him of a benign aspect;—
—Venus and Mars being great in domal dignity, and both fortunate in their houses. But my own star was, in this instance, most opposite. For it so happened, that some brother of the trade had, that same day, assured his lordship that Jupiter was his ascendant, in partile conjunction with Saturn;—he was so enraged at the contradiction, that he knocked me down, kicked me round my cell, and seizing the elegant brass conjuring wand from the hand of my worthy co-adjutor, fairly bent it double over his shoulders before he quitted the apartment. Poor Abdallah's unfortunate evocation of the Dervise at Bagdad, scarcely procured him a severer cudgelling.

"'Not two hours since, I promised immortality to a lady who waited upon

me to purchase a critique; though I saw, from the first two lines, that the leaves of her poem were destined only to invest pounds of sugar, or to interpose their good offices, like a *poursuivant*, between the fiery indignation of an oven, and the tender foundation of a pork pie.

"'What objection can a reasonable man make to my profession? It is but a tax upon vanity. I never applaud any one without being paid for it, and my censure is completely devoid of malice, since I seldom read the works I abuse. In truth, I do not always confine myself to an author's writings; for, if he is much celebrated, any little anecdote of the follies or misfortunes of himself or his family sells still better than abuse of his performance.'

"Good this, was it not? — Will you publish your maiden-speech? — Get it reviewed for you in grand style; depend on me. — Hear a good deal of that sort of thing now. — Have an idea that Lady

Jane Lorn is poetical! — Talking of her, though, don't let me forget an extraordinary piece of news. — You had a standing flirtation with her, if you remember; — knew that your devotion in another quarter prevented any thing more serious. Since your rupture, Lady Jane had a scheme on Anthony Wodehouse; — and both before and since that rupture, she has been actually planning on Sir Thomas Clervaux; — in a fair way to be jilted by her, I fear. Thought Sir Thomas had had more sense; — no judging from appearances, you know. All the world confoundedly surprised; — makes as great a noise as Lord —— ——'s having appeared yesterday in Bond-street, with hair combed smooth and straight, no shirt-collar, very little neckcloth, a waist as long as his tailor's bill, — *no stays!* I do affirm, the fact is incontrovertible! and the rest *en suite*. — Looked dreadfully *gauche*, and don't think it will take: — if it does, will certainly let you know. I will look to your interest in those essen-

tials as if it were my own. As a *parliament-man*, etiquette dictates, that

"I have the honour to be

"Your's eternally,

"EDWARD SURREY."

"Sir Thomas has scarcely had time to congratulate himself on his liberty, before he is on the point of submitting to tenfold worse slavery," said Miss Argyle, breaking the painful pause that succeeded the reading of the letter, and referring immediately to that part most interesting to all parties.

"Such a feeling of liberty," said Grosvenor, "is similar to that, which a criminal experiences on having his irons knocked off previously to his execution. Nothing less than the powerful fascinations of Lady Jane Lorn could have induced even the thoughtless Sir Thomas Clervaux to enter into such an union. He is trifling, but not vicious; and I think there is a means of saving him.

He does not calculate that, on his marriage with Lady Jane, even the laugh of the drivellers with whom he associates will be against him, and I know he cannot endure '*the gay-one's scorn, the trifler's contumely.*' If Lord Montague will suffer me to say that *he* thinks it extremely ridiculous, I think it will be effectually prevented."

Lady Anne was silent, but she received Surrey's letter from the hand of Grosvenor with a smile of beaming happiness, that assured him hope yet existed for him.

CHAP. V.

Others in close recess apart,
Courted the ladies of their heart,
Nor courted them in vain;
For often in the parting hour,
Victorious love asserts his power;
And flinty were her heart could view,
To battle march her lover true,
Could hear, perchance, his last adieu,
Nor own her share of pain!

SCOTT.

It was the gala night of the Duchess of R——.

Never had Isadora shone in such transcendant brilliancy—never had the bewitching lustre of her beauty been so pre-eminent and conspicuous, as on this evening. The beautiful symmetry of her form was veiled but not obscured by a dress of silver tissue, that might well have been a vestment for the altar. The rival roses flourished in triumphant union on her cheek, whilst the continual variableness of her complexion, adding to her

beauty, proved the omnipotence of intellect, by aiding the charms of person with a grace borrowed from mind alone. Her dark and haughty eye of fire beamed in meteor-like brilliancy, and thrilled the very soul of him on whom it rested in its rapid survey of the scenes around, — shaming the feeble lustre of the gems that encircled a brow, stamped with the impress of primeval purity and innocence, — inviting by its openness those who had power to comprehend the characters engraven on it, and repelling the audacious fool, who would have been glad to compliment beauty so surpassing.

She was supported by one arm of Grosvenor; — Lady Anne hung fondly and happily on the other. For since the arrival of Surrey's letter; — since her knowledge of its contents so important to her future felicity, she had no longer avoided the man, above all created beings so dear to her; and that Grosvenor took the earliest possible advantage of a disposition so favourable to him, will readily be imagined.

The entrance of Miss Argyle into this brilliant scene had created a murmur of applause, ill concealed by the busy whisper that instantly circulated through the splendid circle. Surrounded by some of the most eminent characters in Europe, —distinguished by all that can elevate and adorn mortality—she received the notice of those to whom she had been previously introduced, and she admitted the introduction of others till then personally unknown, with that graceful ease and unaffected calmness, which can result from nothing but from habitual presence of mind. She conversed with that self-possession which nothing can impart but the conviction of equal capabilities, with each of these distinguished personages, enlivening her remarks by the most delicate satire, or by slight literary allusions made with that rapidity of touch and idea, which can never be given by culture, but is the inseparable attribute of genius.

Isadora's beautiful eye had traversed

the circle with restless rapidity, seeking the form who was light and life to it. She discovered him, at length, engaged in earnest conversation with the Duke of B——, in what language she was not near enough to understand. Since his arrival in Brussels, Lord Montague had renewed his acquaintance with Colonel P——, who had been his college associate. The Colonel was, at this instant, by the side of his lordship, listening in deep and interested attention to the remarks he was making; the subject of them had irradiated Lord Montague's countenance with a glow and a feeling entirely distinct from its usual quietude: the approach of the Duke of W. and the conversation which succeeded that approach, increased the high character of Lord Montague's countenance, and gave it additional brilliancy of enthusiasm.

They separated; — whether from that species of magnetism which the eye is supposed to possess, or from some other

cause, Lord Montague sought and encountered the full gaze of Isadora. In an instant, he was at her side.

Grosvenor very quietly suffered her arm to drop from his, and immediately glided off with Lady Anne.

"I cannot avoid congratulating your lordship on the gaiety of your air, this evening. I have seldom had the felicity of witnessing so perfect an expression of vivacity in Lord Montague's countenance," said Miss Argyle, continually blushing, in all the various gradations of the roseate tint, extending at the same time her hand. In the attitude her glove fell below her elbow, and disclosed an arm that might have served Apelles for a model, or have called into action the chisel of Praxiteles. Lord Montague's eyes were fixed on it; — the touch — the loveliness displayed — thrilled on his senses; and the strict rules of politeness were sinned against, before he had power to withdraw his gaze.

"I am animated by the sentiments I have just heard from those two illustrious characters," replied Lord Montague. "I am ill at compliment — even, perhaps, at truth that may be mistaken for it — or I would say, that Miss Argyle's appearance this evening has proved to me, that that loveliness which I have hitherto believed perfection, can sometimes surpass itself."

"That is a perfect Gallicism," replied Miss Argyle, blushing, as she aimed at the *badinage;* "were you addressing the Duke of B. in German?"

"I was induced to attempt it, by the polite entreaty of his Highness. I am certain that I acquitted myself very indifferently, for the language lately has not been familiar to me."

"Were you ever residing in Germany?"

"Yes; in its capital I spent some years."

"Your lordship is an adept then at the waltz?"

"In days of yore, I *have* moved in its enchanting mazes; but they are long passed; and maturer age rejects the amusements of extreme youth."

"You are not then going to ask me to dance?" said Isadora, with an air of affected pique.

"You cannot doubt that to be near *you*, whether in the dance, or in our present situation, is felicity. But,—may I speak to you freely?"

"I am offended that you think it necessary to ask that question."

"Does displeasure always wear such a face?" demanded Lord Montague, gazing fondly on her. "It is bad policy in a lady to look pre-eminently lovely in anger; for our own sakes, we ought not to be solicitous to please her."

"Another Gallicism!—In breathing the air of France, I fear you have inhaled the spirit of the natives."

"I have not yet explained the cause of my offensive question," said Lord Montague, smiling; "I was going to

say, that it would be excessive pain to me to see Miss Argyle waltz."

"Dismiss all apprehension on that subject, my lord. I *never* waltz—I cannot attitudinize:—I am not ambitious of exhibiting myself in the arms of any man; and I would rather see a figurante at the Opera, than in a private assembly. I *did* hope, Lord Montague, that you *never* danced."

"And *why* did you hope so, Miss Argyle?"

"Because it is doing that which is generally much better done by boys and drivellers, who are good at nothing valuable; and who, to be conspicuous, are glad to excel in trifles."

"It is many years since I have danced. I am better pleased with a spectacle, than in being one of the actors."

"I am *very* glad;—I hope never to see a man whom I particularly venerate, or admire, dance;" said Miss Argyle, with animation.

That one sentence — the manner in which it was uttered — more than half-discovered to Lord Montague, the powerful interest with which Isadora regarded him.

"Mr. Grosvenor dances," observed Lord Montague, pointing him out to Miss Argyle's notice, as he bounded down the dance with Lady Anne, in all the elasticity of pleasure.

"I supposed he would: — he is very young; and, to use a term which I have continually heard applied to him, *divinely handsome*. We can very well picture Apollo dancing with the Muses or Graces; but it would be a horrible anomaly to represent Jupiter mingling in their revels."

Never before had a scene dedicated entirely to amusement, been so delightful to either of them. In the very fulness of happiness, they were entirely engrossed by each other; — the brilliancy around gave a thousand additional charms to both; — and from the deep, and hi-

therto carefully-concealed interest that mutually affected them, there breathed a touching softness in their manners and their sentiments; whilst it added innumerable delicate, tender, and indefinite *traits* to their countenances.

Isadora, perhaps, had never enjoyed a happiness so pure, or that promised to be so permanent. A hope — a hope amounting to conviction — that she was, indeed, beloved by that being who was scarcely to be equalled — occupied and enlarged her heart. The subdued tones of his always irresistible voice—the impassioned eloquence of his eye—the winning softness and attractive elegance of his manner — the impatience he manifested on the slightest interruption of his conversation with her—were so many delightful vouchers for the confirmation of her hopes.

Lord Montague could not see Isadora engrossed entirely by himself;—he could not listen to the just audible sweetness of her voice addressing him alone;—he

could not observe her attention, confined, as by magic, to one point:—he could not contemplate the deep emotion evinced by the constant variableness of her complexion—without admitting, at the same time, the long and ardently desired conviction, that he was loved — with a love passing that of woman. At a moment when these blissful sentiments were at their height in the heart of each, an unusual agitation pervaded the whole assembly. Colonel P. approached Lord Montague in haste—communicated some intelligence, with all the brevity of impatience—grasped his hand—and had quitted the apartment.

Lord Montague arose. Isadora trembled violently, and became suddenly pale, perfectly unconscious of the cause. Her heart beat violently; and it seemed, as if life or death hung on the event of the next moment.

"Miss Argyle—Isadora—you are faint;—the heat of the room, perhaps," said Lord Montague, assisting her to

rise, and affording her the support of his arm. "Good God, you tremble; — you are agitated; — do not alarm yourself: it is just ascertained that Buonaparte's army is advanced farther than was supposed; — that it is, in fact, at this moment engaging a part of our troops."

"By being separated from their allies, my noble countrymen will be slaughtered!" said Miss Argyle, pale with agitation.

"I *hope* — I *trust* not," replied Lord Montague, emphatically. "They are at present supported by auxiliary forces, and will be able to sustain the attack until reinforced. But shall I see you to your carriage? I entrust to you the charge of informing the Bishop of this event. Present to him, also, my best wishes for his health — for his happiness. I shall accompany some military friends to the field, and rely on my bringing or sending to you the earliest intelligence."

"*You! You*, Lord Montague!" exclaimed Isadora, evidently anxious to

believe she had misunderstood him; "going to dare the horrors of battle! For Heaven's sake, my lord—" then blushing at the earnestness of her manner, she interrupted herself by enquiring, "Are you, then, appointed to some command?"

"By no means," returned Lord Montague: "but, in a contest on which empire is depending, every individual can render his country some service. Even your horses and carriage will be most useful."

"May I ask you to accompany me to the Bishop?" demanded Miss Argyle, hoping, she knew not why, that something would occur to prevent Lord Montague's departure.

"Most assuredly I will have that pleasure," he replied; and desiring the coachman to use all his haste, he assisted Miss Argyle into the carriage.

What a transition of feeling had the interval of so very few moments wrought! The heart of Isadora was absorbed by the

conviction of the magnitude of those dangers to which Lord Montague was about voluntarily to expose himself. She leaned back, gazing earnestly on his form, and endeavouring to trace the lines of it, with the painful impression, that it was possible she should see him no more!

How completely had the bloom of the preceding hours faded! The moment in which happiness had burst into life for her, was also to witness the funeral of her hopes! How many delightful prospects, to which her heart had just given existence, and which she thought fondly to cherish, were nipped in their earliest bud! To entreat Lord Montague to abandon his designs would, she felt, be unavailing; and her delicacy was likewise a barrier to its practicability. Every minor consideration she would gladly have disregarded; and she indulged an expectation that the remonstrances of the Bishop would dissuade him from being present in the battle.

"In case of the enemy's attack proving successful, they would, in course, occupy this city," said Miss Argyle, desirous to hear the tone of that voice, which might soon, perhaps, be hushed for ever.

"I hope there is no probability of such an occurrence," replied Lord Montague; "I will, however, make every arrangement for your safety."

"Regardless *only* of your own!" interrupted Miss Argyle, with an interest and emotion it was impossible to repress.

"Isadora," he said, passionately alive only to the blissful convictions of the moment, pressing her hand repeatedly to his lips, "*You* are my safety, my hope, my life, my all! Your happiness is the dearest, the most important — almost the sole object of my existence; and do not suspect me of colouring too highly, when I declare to you, that this moment I would *die* to secure it. The scene — the awful scene, in which I am soon to be actively engaged, seems to demand

from me this avowal. Isadora, I love—nay, I *adore* you!—

> But these are words that all can use:
> I'd prove it more in deed than word!

I would lay myself at your feet; but I know that the glory—the proud pre-eminence my native land has hitherto enjoyed above the nations of the earth, are set upon one dreadful cast. You, Isadora, loved and dearest, *you* would not have me withhold the assistance I am able to afford it: *you*, surely, would not have me shrink in this tremendous hour! I ask of you, at this moment, to lay aside the minute formalities which cold punctilio requires, and to tell me that I may hope. Say to me only, that if I return, I shall be dear to you. Assure me that, during my absence, you will think of me; and I shall be glad to preserve a life which that assurance will render valuable."

Astonished, delighted, overpowered, Isadora could reply only by a tear that was invisible.

"Isadora," said Lord Montague, clasping her hands in his own, "will you not speak to me?"

"Alas, my lord," she replied, almost inarticulately, "it is a painful feeling to become fully sensible of a blessing in the very moment we must relinquish it, perhaps for ever. In an hour like this, hesitation and concealment would be cruel and degrading. I would emulate your lordship's candour: I confess that my heart has never known to love but once, and that it has long desired no other object than yourself. Perhaps the golden period of my life which I passed with you at Mr. Walworth's, may be the date of a preference since heightened —" She paused.

"Proceed, dearest Isadora: do not conceal from me one blissful assurance," exclaimed Lord Montague, rapturously. "At Mr. Walworth's! Oh, Isadora, even *then*

Thou *wert*, thou art,
The cherished madness of my heart!

Proceed: every moment is precious; I cannot allow one instant to pass without being marked by some avowal from you, that I may continually remember; that I may live upon, during my absence.— A preference since heightened: let me complete the sentence for you—since heightened into *passion!*"

Isadora was silent a few moments. At length she continued:—

"At present my life seems identified with your's. If you are again to be the preserver of it, be careful of your own."

If there be on earth the feeling of pure, unadulterated delight,—the thrill of boundless ecstacy,—a present realization of all we hope and wish to enjoy in heaven,—a conviction that the measure of bliss is indeed o'erflowing, Lord Montague's heart was at this moment the abode of them, and expanded to admit the full measure of them.

The event of the approaching conflict, the danger of his friends and country,— all, all were forgotten: he saw only the dear

object of every solicitude consenting to unite her destiny with his; he heard only the soft vibration of those accents that assured him he was happy.

The carriage stopt;—Lord Montague conducted Miss Argyle into the saloon. What overpowering sensations agitated them on encountering the glance of each other!—Isadora wept in his embrace; Lord Montague concealed the agitation of his countenance on her shoulder. A thousand delightful and interesting ideas occupied him; a thousand brilliant visions floated before his gaze;—the avowal he had so lately heard, produced a delirium, that gave to all he felt, and all he hoped, the semblance of phantasy and delusion. It seemed as if he were viewing the brilliant meteors of a northern sky, that distracted the eye enraptured with gazing on them.—He looked up; the phantoms vanished; he saw—he felt the influence of the bright star beaming on him: reality was around him: he had, at length, secured

that happiness so often fleeting from his grasp; he felt it in his arms—in his heart; it was in the present—it was in the future; it existed—and the term of its existence was to be eternity.

CHAP. VI.

Search where ambition raged with vigour steeled,
Where slaughter like the rapid light'ning ran;
And say, while memory weeps the blood-stained field,
Where lies the chief, and where the common man?
CUNNINGHAM.

The western sun now shot a feeble ray,
And scattered faintly the remains of day.
Evening approached; but oh, what hosts of foes
Were never to behold that evening close!
Thick'ning their ranks, and wedged in firm array,
The close compacted Britons win their way.
In vain the cannon their throng'd war defaced,
With tracks of death, and laid the battle waste.
Still pressing forward to the fight they broke
Through flames of sulphur, and a night of smoke!
ADDISON.

Ut belli signum Laurenti Turnus ab arce
Extulit, et rauco strepuerunt cornua cantu;
Utque acres concussit equos utque impulit arma:
Extemplo turbati animi: simul omne tumultu
Conjurat trepido Latium sævitque juventus
Effera.
VIRGIL.

LORD Montague retired from Miss Argyle, and sought the apartment of the Bishop. He detailed rapidly the import-

ant crisis that had arrived. The venerable prelate arose in haste, ejaculating prayers for the safety of that country so well and so worthily beloved; — beseeching a blessing on the courage of her armies, and on the talents, the might, and the valour of the hero who was the soul of them!

A far different tale remained to be unfolded; a tale of love, and not of war —of conquest ascertained, not to be hoped for. That tale was told; and a blessing, such as fond fathers pray on the son of their love, was fervently invoked by the prelate on the future union of Lord Montague and Isadora.

Previously to his departure for a scene of such imminent peril, Lord Montague desired to make such arrangements with regard to his several unentailed estates, as might secure them to Isadora in the event of his death.

For this purpose it was necessary that some witnesses should be summoned; — whilst these were procuring, and whilst

the Bishop was employed in framing a hasty but sufficient document, Lord Montague sought the source of all his anxieties, his fears, and his hopes, in the saloon.

He entered silently; — Isadora sat pale — her arms folded across her breast, and her eyes bent on the ground. A large veil half shaded her head; — the splendid dress of the gala still glittered on her form, in melancholy contrast to the forlornness and desolation of her feelings; — sometimes a tear rolled slowly down her marble cheek, tarnishing the lustre of her garments. That love, which had been controlled with a violence that threatened her very existence, had bounded into life and ecstacy at the powerful voice of him who had given it being. In proportion as it had hitherto been repressed, so now was its action more forcible. All the powers of her mind were collected to this one point; — it seemed as if their existence were dependent on it; as if to destroy one, would

be to annihilate the other. Love and delicacy and pride no longer contended for pre-eminence, — they were identified; and the master-passion became a vortex which ingulfed every minor sentiment.

Lord Montague advanced; — his approach to her was rather the privileged tenderness of a husband, than the timid hesitation of a lover. The danger of the moment seemed to have destroyed, at once, all the intermediate gradations; she had confessed her love for him, and that confession had privileged him to address her as his bride, and had bound him to protect her as such.

She perceived him; — she extended her hand; — that lovely arm was again enwreathed in his — again it trembled in his pressure; — their eyes met; — hers swam in tears, as she withdrew them from the ardour of his gaze. — "You will think me very weak," my lord," she said, softly, — "I who thought a few moments since that I could have braved

the tempest, am shrinking from the cloudy aspect of the heavens. — There is so much to fear, that I forget hope also exists — I seem to lose sight of her in despair! — And you go! — do not look thus reproachfully on me, Lord Montague; — I do not *entreat* your stay; — no! though I am not heroine sufficient to rejoice in the glory that awaits you, blind to the hazard of its attainment, I would not unnerve the heart of a hero! — Forgive me; — believe me, I would chide away this weakness! — You have seen our venerable friend, and he — ?" Isadora paused enquiringly.

"He has blessed the enterprise!" said Lord Montague firmly.

Isadora trembled violently: — unstable as had been the foundation of her hope that the Bishop's interference would prevent Lord Montague's engaging in the enterprise, she could not entirely lose it, without feeling a pang that seemed to

anticipate all the pains, that could possibly affect her after life!

She disengaged her hand from his: — she unclasped the jewels on her arms; — she looked at them earnestly, then covered them with her veil; — she clasped her hands over her eyes; — she pressed them on her temples, on her heart; — a brilliant cross that had been the gift of royalty, caught her view; she removed it; — "they mock me — oh, *do* they not?" she asked in affecting earnestness, with that deep pathos of voice, that seems to impart to the hearer a full sense of the sufferer's misery.

"Be that my amulet!" said Lord Montague; "be it the pledge of my safety and of my return!"

He bent his head; — she encircled his neck with the chain of pearls; — its fair lustre was well adapted for the service to which it had been consecrated. The sacred cross sparkled on his bosom; "if it has glittered in Earl Godfrey's banner, it has never seen more sacred ser-

vice!" he said, kissing it devoutly. "Be composed, my Isadora; the path where duty points, I pursue; I trust the event to Him, in whose hands are the issues of all things!"

Miss Argyle forcibly resumed her energies; — she regained her tranquillity; — she partook some refreshment with Lord Montague, and though in the course of it a tear *would* start when she felt that possibly they might be thus associated never again, — its source was *affection, not weakness.*

Lord Montague again sought the Bishop; — his arrangements were completed; — he took leave of his friend with composure; — he left messages to Grosvenor and to Lady Anne; — and being informed that his horses and servants were in attendance, he prepared for the last, dreaded trial of his firmness.

Isadora arose on his entrance; she advanced to him; — "You are going; this is our parting scene," she said, glancing around with an assumed firm-

ness, that was fearfully contrasted by the altered tone of her voice, broken also by her short, quick breathings.

"It will be for me to bring you the first intelligence of England's triumph," said he, assuming an air of cheerfulness.

She spoke not; — she became paler than before; — she grasped his hand; — if life had depended on it, she could not utter a syllable.

"*Farewell! — God preserve you!*" — He folded her for an instant to his bosom — kissed the bursting tear from either eye — gained the door of the apartment — looked long and lingeringly, as the dying eye may be supposed to rest on the receding form of the being that had been its light on earth, — and was gone!

Rushing down the staircase with a rapidity that seemed to express a doubt of himself, Lord Montague sprung on his horse, and charging an attendant to learn if the Duke of W. had left the

city, he joined the general stream, on the road to Quatre Bras.

The streets of Brussels presented one general scene of confusion. Every vehicle that could be procured was put into motion: —

> The news of an hour's age did hiss the teller;

and

> He that spoke
> Did grasp the hearer's wrist, whilst he that heard,
> With nods and wrinkled brows made fearful action.

A deafening mixture of indistinct sounds, over which the shrill blast of the trumpet was at intervals audible, pervaded every part of the place. The labouring mechanic left his work half finished; — the pale invalid quitted the secure situation affection had prepared for him; — and hoary age deserted the fire-side nook that had so long been appropriated to him, to catch every breath of rumour, and communicate it to his less fortunate fellows.

Lord Montague overtook Colonel P. at the head of his troops, a short distance from the city. The Duke was in advance; and they soon learned the events of the preceding day, and the loss of the Prussians.

Miss Argyle endured all that a mind of high sensibility can be supposed to feel on such an occasion. If the stragglers who continually passed through the city, declared that England had the advantage of the day, she felt that *victory*, even the salvation of her country, would be dearly purchased by his blood. But when, about three o'clock, it was confidently reported, that the British were obliged to fall back, she felt that the conviction he had died in the arms of victory, would be bliss compared to the dreadful certainty that his life had been given in vain.

The Bishop, from the window, asked tidings of a person who appeared charged with dispatches: — " *England bleeds at*

every pore!" he replied, burying his spurs in the sides of the foaming animal.

Multitudes of the wounded began to pour in. Miss Argyle scrutinized with severe anxiety every passing countenance, dreading that each survey would present the features of the expiring Montague.

Night came, and the conflict had not terminated. The darkness proved to her, that the agony she had experienced during the day, was, indeed, susceptible of increase. It was the hour of tranquillity; and though symptoms of agitation continued to murmur through the streets, compared to the preceding din and distraction, every thing was hushed into stillness.

It was horrible,—it was insupportable; — time seemed, at length, to have found a resting-place; — there was a dreadful interval between the past and the future, which was never to be gone; — a grave in which two eternities

were buried. She leaned from the window of her apartment; — the twilight of a summer's night showed to her the outline of various forms; — undistinguishable — flitting away like passing shadows. To see without discerning, was giving food to her agony. She retired from the casement; — she paced the room, and desired to bury reflection in its profound darkness. A hundred phantoms hovered around her; — torches continually passing, threw streams of light into the aparment; — her own motion distracted her; — she cast herself on the couch: — the quietude — the deadly calm around her, contrasted the more forcibly with the turbulent anguish of her feelings. She arose, — she knelt, — she combated the weakness of her heart; — she prayed in her soul, and with her tears; — she poured out her spirit at the footstool of God; — she arraigned herself for her blind adoration of mortal man, — for her distrust of Omnipotence, — her want of submission to His will; — she

buried her face in her hands, as if to close out the view of all but Him in whose presence she more immediately felt herself; — it was impossible for feelings like hers, to resolve themselves into words; — but there were prayers in her sighs — in her very breathings — in the humility of her spirit — in her fervent aspirings after the "peace of God!"

She arose; — she still wept; — but she had intrusted her cause into the hands of One mighty to save, — and she was tranquil.

Her heart yet sickened at the thought of sleep; — she quitted her apartment and sought the garden.

It was something past the noon of a summer's night; — the clear twilight softened every object into new beauty; — with the rays of the sun, the vivid colouring of the flowers and of the foliage had disappeared; — the face of nature shone in the pale, soft loveliness of beauty dimmed by sorrow. The genii of calmness and consolation seemed to

hover in the whispering breeze. It was the very spot to indulge in the luxury of subdued grief, and it must be an agony scarcely less than frenzy, that could resist its chastening influence.

The morning dawned, and with it came the anxieties, the hopes, and the terrors of the preceding day.

And as that day had worn away, so did this disappear, different only by the more numerous arrivals of prisoners and of the wounded.

Exhausted nature could no longer endure the continuance of mental conflicts so torturing; and Isadora spent this night in profound repose.

But the images which had occupied her waking fancy, were presented more distinctly in her visions of the night. Montague wounded — dying — calling fondly on her in his last moments — was continually before her. Sometimes she lived over the past in all its beauty, — sometimes she embodied the future enveloped in a shroud, and descending to the darkness of the grave.

It was about ten o'clock on the succeeding morning, when the distant roll of a heavy cannonade declared the work of death had commenced. The anxiety visible in every countenance, was heightened or diminished as this tremendous sound appeared to advance or to recede. The report of every succeeding minute contradicted that of the last, and increased the general consternation. Some were engaged in exertions for the security of their property; — some fled precipitately; — whilst others awaited the event in the dreadful patience of stupor.

At length the crisis on which the fate of Europe hung, arrived. The whole city was in commotion; — the wounded soldier staggered to his home, to tell the important news and to die. The French were routed — the victory of the allied armies was complete in every point, and the triumph of Britain was perfect!

The glow which should have warmed the heart of the Englishwoman at this

moment, was displaced by the chill of uncertainty. Where was the messenger of Lord Montague? — where, Lord Montague himself?

Grosvenor saw her distress, and participated in it. He enquired — he sought tidings — in vain. Not one sentence could be heard that related to him; — and every moment confirmed to the mind of Isadora, the gloomy conviction that he indeed lived no longer.

At ten, one of his servants arrived with his arm broken. He had quitted the field at four, and was charged to tell the Bishop that the position was yet maintained, but the carnage dreadful. He had left his lord in the heat of the action, endeavouring to extricate his friend the Colonel, who was dreadfully wounded. The horse on which Lord Montague had left Brussels, was shot under him during the first day's action. — He himself had been delayed on his journey by being crushed between the

carriages, and thus having his arm broken.

Isadora drank every syllable of his recital, and ardently desired to hear more, though every instant confirmed the fallacy of her hopes and the reality of her fears.

A second servant of Lord Montague's arrived scarcely an hour after his companion. His ghastly countenance was a terrible prelude to the tale he had to unfold; — Isadora looked on him; — fancy anticipated the worst, and with the calmness of despair she bade him communicate quickly the tidings he brought, and terminate a suspense which could not be inferior to the most alarming certainty.

This man stated that his lord had succeeded in rescuing his friend, but on his retreat, he himself had been, in turn, surrounded. He had watched the conflict, and had ridden to the assistance of his master. But on his arriving at the spot, the whole party had disappeared: a horse, which he recognised to have be-

longed to Lord Montague, lay on the ground dead, and covered with innumerable wounds. By the side of the animal ——

Isadora sprung to the narrator; she wrenched from his grasp that which had *fallen by the horse*,—she pressed it, stained with blood, to her lips, — to her heart; she gazed on it with the strained view of madness; she raised it to her burning temples, and started from the freezing chillness of its touch. It was the chain of pearls, the sacred cross, the amulet, which was to have defended the life of Lord Montague! But the chain was broken, and the jewels that remained were drenched in blood,—in his life-blood!

Their pale loveliness was crimsoned by the sanguine stain; there was not a jewel that did not bear evidence to the fate with which the conflict had teemed. "It has been bathed in his heart's best blood! Oh God! at what a price was it purchased!"

She spoke in the piercing scream of unutterable agony; her eyes shone, for an instant, in the fire of delirium. Overcome, at length, by the violence of her emotions, she sunk into a stupor, from which, it appeared, that nothing could rouse her.

The long gray lines, shooting across the eastern horizon, bespoke the approach of morning. The heavy clatter of horses, at length, excited the attention of Isadora. The trampling on the pavement ceased; the horsemen appeared to pause at the corner of the street, and to separate. The sound was renewed, but considerably weaker than before; it proceeded from the advance of one equestrian. He approached rapidly; he rested, he dismounted, entered the house; Isadora had fainted in his arms.

She recovered; excess of happiness had burst the thraldom of her senses, she was assured of her felicity, Lord Mon-

tague stood before her, Lord Montague supported her;—LordMontague, glowing with health and with happiness, not only had escaped death, but returned covered with glory, attended by no expense but the having dared every danger of the fight.

CHAP. VII.

While cymbal's clang, and trumpet's strain,
The knell of battle toll'd;
And trampling squadrons beat the plain,
Till the clouds echoed back again,
As if the thunder roll'd!

CROKER.

Ye sainted spirits of the warrior dead,
Whose giant force Britannia's armies led;
Your sons behold, in arm, in heart, the same,
Still press the footsteps of parental fame.

HEBER.

LORD Montague learnt from the Bishop and from Grosvenor the agony that had distracted Isadora when his safety had appeared questionable. He exulted in the felicity of his prospects; he felt that he was loved as he desired to be — with a love of which he had never before dared to believe her capable.

Youth and beauty did not, at this moment, shrink from administering to the wounded and the dying. Fastidiousness and refinement were, at once, discarded; every thing that humanity could dictate was to be performed for those who had bled in that field, for their country.

When these duties—for duties they appeared to our English residents—were discharged, Isadora asked from Lord Montague some account of the battle.

"In whatever view we contemplate it," he said, "it was awful and tremendous. I have before seen smaller bodies of troops engaged, but, in this instance, there appeared to be a sentiment excited, different from any thing I ever witnessed. These immense masses of men were animated but by one feeling—a desire of complete destruction to each other. You can form no idea, Isadora, how man is to be changed by circumstances. Our friend Colonel ——, whose disposition generally abounds with the milk of human kindness, seemed at times to have

imbibed the fury of a tiger: every feeling was absorbed in that of victory. I dragged him with great difficulty from amongst the cavalry after he had lost an arm by a cannon-shot; and on my removing him a short distance from the carnage, his continual and only enquiry was after the Duke, and if the Prussians were visible. It was in his rescue that I must have lost the chain, Isadora; a slight scratch on the back of my neck severed it, I imagine; and in dismounting from my dying horse, it escaped from my bosom."

"After all, then, it *was* your blood!" said Miss Argyle, shuddering.

"It was," he replied, smiling in delightful affection; "it has been baptized unto victory, and you must return it to me. You remember that very tall officer whose dancing we noticed on that memorable night of the Duchess of R.'s gala: he was killed within a very few paces of me. The troops who were accustomed to exercise in the square, were entirely

cut to pieces. I fear, the returns of the killed and wounded will present us with very many whom we have known since our residence at Brussels!"

"What a triumph must have been your's, my lord, on seeing the enemy give way!"

"That you may have a correct idea of that event," replied Lord Montague, "I must tell you, in the first place, that during the attack of the French, the army under the Duke was arranged in solid squares, and occasionally lay on the ground, to avoid the shower of shells and balls directed at them. As the enemy's cavalry or infantry approached, they rose to receive them, and thus the day past. But when the Duke determined to act on the offensive, these squares opened, and extended themselves into a line, forming the grandest spectacle you can possibly conceive. Their cheers on advancing were answered by a cannonade, that seemed to rend the very vault of heaven. The smoke prevented my distinguishing

the impression made on the French line at this moment, but the pause of their fire convinced me all was over. When it cleared, the confusion was beyond description: the setting sun shining upon the lifted sabres of our cavalry, gave that luminous appearance which you have observed on the sea in a fine day. I saw Napoleon very distinctly during the earlier part of the action through the Colonel's glass; but I was not able afterwards to distinguish him. The Duke traversed the field with the rapidity of an arrow: his power of calculation never appeared to be absent for a moment. His soul seems peculiarly formed for the hour of danger, —cool and deliberate in his arrangements, but rapid and decisive in their execution.

" I shall be able hereafter, when my mind becomes more tranquil, and when the horrors of the scene are softened by distance, to detail to you many interesting particulars. Dreadful as the spectacle was, I shall always consider myself fortunate in having been present at one

of the greatest events that have occurred to any nation, in any age. My gratitude to Heaven for preservation in a scene of such tremendous horrors, will cease only with my life.

"During the battle, I observed several females within the range of the fire."

"There is but one interest powerful enough to bring a woman into such a scene, I should imagine," said Miss Argyle; — "the hope of relieving their wounded or dying husbands."

"Doubtless, some were so employed," answered Lord Montague; "but most of them, I believe, were fully occupied in removing whatever was valuable from the dead. Some of them lay on the field; but whether dead or exhausted, I am ignorant."

"It is a glorious triumph; but where is he who foresaw it?" said Grosvenor.

He was leaning on a harp that stood in the apartment: he struck a few full chords; then, accompanying them in a low, sweet voice, he sang, —

What vessel is yonder half lost in the waves,
That the billows conflicting seem bent to o'erwhelm,
Yet gallantly mann'd every danger she braves?
'Tis the bark of Britannia with Pitt at the helm!

'Yon's the beacon of honour, and freedom's yon bay!'
He cried, with a voice still a stranger to fear;
'Though surrounded by foes, and through perils our way,
'Tis yonder we'll anchor, or perish while here.'

Now proudly she enters the haven of fame;
She has vanquish'd her foes, ev'ry danger o'ercome;
While millions applauding in raptures exclaim,
'Where's the Pilot that saved her?—we'll welcome him home!'

Ah! where is the Pilot? see, yonder he lies,
He sunk in the contest where nobly he'd striven;
Yet blest was *his* lot, who ere fate closed his eyes,
Saved the country he lov'd, by the guidance of Heaven!

A very few weeks passed away; Lord Montague and Miss Argyle, with their friends, had arrived in England.

Immediate preparations were made for

the marriage of Lady Anne de Burgh and Grosvenor: Miss Argyle and Lord Montague remained in London till after its celebration, and then accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Walworth to Cumberland, whilst the Bishop proceeded to his palace.

There they retraced every scene which memory had held sacred; — on the very spot where Lord Montague had once saved the life of Isadora, he received the assurance that that life should be devoted to him.

Now that they were continually together, he appreciated more justly than ever the loveliness and the excellence of Miss Argyle's character. He admired and exulted in the energy of her mind, its power, and its strength; but he adored the infinite variety of its appearances: it was impossible to be wearied where there was no sameness: each day he seemed to bow to the dominion of a new sovereign, without ever changing his object. Submissive or haughty; ten-

der or dignified; pensive or vivacious; sensible or witty, she was always charming. It was not her beauty that enchanted Lord Montague so powerfully, it was the witchery of her manner: he no longer regarded the former; and it was a proof of the complete empire she had gained over him, that he sometimes forgot its very existence.

But the bloom of these hours was too vivid to linger long. Lord Montague was compelled to revisit London, and afterwards to repair to his seat in Surrey.

It was possible that the urgency of the affair, (for it was a tedious law process,) might detain him two months, according to chronicle computation; in the lovers' almanack it stood for two ages.

Their separation was sensibly felt by both: they proposed to alleviate the pain of absence by frequent letters; but there was a feeling of misery in the conviction that many suns would set and rise again, and yet they should not be blest by the presence of each other: but

the conviction that they might, even at this moment, have been separated for ever, reconciled them, in some measure, to this transient disunion.

Parliamentary duties had recalled Grosvenor and Lady Anne to London. Lord Montague sought them immediately on his arrival, and learnt from the former that Sir Thomas Clervaux was on the very eve of uniting himself to Lady Jane Lorn.

That Lord Montague could be the *friend* of the Baronet was impossible. He was, nevertheless, interested for the fate of the man who had introduced him to Miss Argyle; and he permitted Grosvenor to dissuade Sir Thomas, in his name, from so fatal a measure, and one that must be attended with so much infamy.

In consequence of Grosvenor's representations, Sir Thomas, who had begun to entertain some unpleasant reflections on the subject, and who only wanted the impetus which Grosvenor now afforded

him, immediately waited on Lady Jane Lorn, to break off that matrimonial treaty already commenced between them.

"Fine weather, Lady Jane! we may look for an excellent sporting season!" was the Baronet's salutation to his mistress.

"I am excessively glad of it, upon my faith," replied Lady Jane.

"Are you really? Why? do you ever hunt?"

"A pretty question from a sportsman! Who, in the name of Heaven, could live without it! *Hunting!* it is the *paradise* of those who know how to estimate it; I could fancy myself at this moment in the field; the hounds throw off—the chorus of horns—halloos—and the music of the dogs, resounds every where. What delightful confusion! what agreeable noise! I prefer it to an Opera-house bravura, or one of Catalani's solos;—nothing stops me."

"Not a hedge and ditch?" said Sir Thomas, enquiringly.

"No, nor yet a five-barred gate! I am thinking that I shall have a great deal of pleasure in hunting down in —— shire."

"Your ladyship thinks of being there in the season?" said Sir Thomas, carelessly.

"Undoubtedly: of course, you will prefer the country, then."

"Oh, I am quite out of the question: for my own part, I intend to reside chiefly in the country."

"I have no objection: one may always kill time there with great facility."

"The *late Lady Clervaux* never liked it: I never could persuade her to mount a horse, which used to vex me confoundedly; for she was an exquisite girl, and would have looked admirably well on a fine animal."

"I prefer it, however," said Lady Jane; "when one is not completely in solitude, the country never appears dull."

"That will be my case, however; for,

in compliance with the advice of my best friends, I do not intend to marry ?'

"Sir Thomas Clervaux! do I understand you clearly? Is this an *off-declaration?*" demanded the indignant Lady Jane.

"Why, in fact, — it rains hard ;— the truth is, my Lord Montague has set before me a few of the ***disagreeables*** that must unavoidably result from my union with your ladyship; and, therefore, it appears to me, that both parties would be happier and more respectable asunder."

"Lord Montague!" said Lady Jane, after a slight pause, which assisted her to smother the passion that agitated her; "the man who is directed by Lord Montague can never be otherwise than indifferent to Lady Jane Lorn. After what has just passed, I need not remind you, Sir Thomas Clervaux, that your visits here will not be received: at present, I have the honour to wish you a very good morning."

The Baronet arose ; bowed with a vast deal of assurance ; backed to the door, and *whistled* himself off with an air.

"Lord Montague!" said Lady Jane Lorn, as she watched the progress of Sir Thomas Clervaux down the street ; "he may yet live to feel the vengeance of a disappointed woman!" As for Sir Thomas Clervaux, Lord Montague had so completely impressed upon his mind the maxim of Grotius :

> Sic quo quis propior suæ puellæ est ;
> Hoc stultus propior suæ ruinæ est,

that he, in fact, felt *nothing!*

CHAP. VIII.

Ah me! what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron!

HUDIBRAS.

Now, while the angry trumpet sounds alarms,
And dying groans do fill the empty air,
Richmond, I say, Richmond, come forth and
singly face me!
Richard is hoarse with daring thee to arms!

SHAKSPEARE.

——From each hand with speed retir'd
Where erst was thickest fight, th' angelic throng,
And left large field, unsafe within the wind
Of such commotion, such as to set forth
Great things by small, if, nature's concord broke,
Among the constellations war were sprung,
Two planets rushing from aspect malign
Of fiercest opposition in mid sky
Should combat.........

MILTON.

Well, 'tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea! but how if honour should prick me off, when I come on! how then?

Can honour set-to a leg? no;—or an arm? no —or take away the grief of a wound? no. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then?——

SHAKSPEARE.

SIR Thomas [illegible]ervaux left the mansion of Lady Jane Lorn, and proceeded down

the mall, immersed in *thankful* thought profound, and elevated to the most delicious pitch of self-gratulation.

He passed down the street with the firm elastic tread of a man upborne by cheerfulness. Erostratus scarcely felt more pleasure when he had fired the temple at Ephesus. Careless of what might happen, he loitered on, until he encountered Surrey.

That *rencontre* brought into his mind an affair in which he was to act an important part. Taking the arm of Surrey, they turned into a tavern — I think, THE TIGER'S HEAD.

The members for the Borough of —— had, as may, perhaps, be remembered, *fought a duel.* The affair, however, by some means, was compromised, or *passed over*, and it appeared that its slumbers would be eternal; for the antagonists met continually on the most amicable terms, in the apartments of Surrey and Sir Thomas Clervaux. But one of those untoward accidents, on which it baffles

the skill of man to calculate, had raked the scarcely-extinguished ashes, and cherished the spark it found amongst them into a flame.

Mr. Gaveston, the younger of these Borough representatives, was on the eve of marriage with a city heiress of immense fortune: moreover, the lady was, as her sex generally are, an enthusiastic admirer of *courage*. A suspicion of her lover's failure in that important requisite had been infused into her mind by the ingenuity of a rival, and it was to satisfy *her* that the ancient subject of dispute was revived, and a place of meeting, with all its concomitant circumstances, arranged.

Sir James Lawrence, the colleague of Mr. Gaveston, was compelled to accord with these arrangements: his friend, Mr. Surrey, could invent no plausible excuse for declining the office of second; whilst, on the other hand, Sir Thomas Clervaux was to officiate in that capacity to Mr. Gaveston.

Surrey conducted Sir Thomas into a private apartment at the Tiger's Head, where they compared the notes they had just received from the principals.

"Ha! our private instructions are nearly the same as to *matter*, I perceive," said the Baronet, laughing: "they point out to your notice all the avenues of *honourable escape* from this *horrible business*. In fact, I have no doubt we shall be able to make such arrangements as will be satisfactory to all parties;—not the least hesitation in affirming it."

"'Pon my soul, devilish glad to hear it," said Surrey: "Credit me, I am willing to join in any expedient to avert bloodshed."

"These must do the business, sir: these are at the same time the preservers of your honour and of your life," replied Sir Thomas, producing three or four balls.

Surrey shuddered as he received the terrible instruments of destruction: the coward blood fled from his pallid cheek;

the hand that came in contact with these destructive weapons, was palsied. His panic, however, was considerably diminished when, on examining them, he perceived that they were composed of cork, and coloured to resemble lead.

"A most excellent design—a most admirable contrivance, 'pon my soul! Vote me a bore if it is not," exclaimed Surrey, with great satisfaction.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Baronet; "I see you are but a novice in this sort of affairs. A duel!—I have been in several, and by the Lord Harry, I am a strenuous supporter of their utility and necessity. I like them, Ned; they give a fellow an air of courage and fierceness:—if *a* DANDY could but once allow himself sufficient freedom of movement to pull the trigger of a pistol, the hearts of all the females in his sphere would be his lawful prize;—a wreath, blooming as that which decks the heroes of Waterloo, would encircle his ruffian head."

"By the by," interrupted Surrey,

"when does the *Salvator Rosa* style go out;—more trouble keeping one's *chevelure dis*-ordered, than *classically* arranged. Thought the ruffian method, as you call it,—that is, 'the quills upon the fretful porcupine,'—was quite *done up*. Went into a manufacturing place about a fortnight since, and saw four or five of the canaille—all of a family, I believe—exhibiting the Salvator Rosa method, and boring the whole place with their *patois*, by parading the *pavé*, and talking with as little respite as is allowed to a bell at a contested election."

"But the duel," resumed the Baronet.

"Aye, true, the duel," said Surrey, sighing audibly.

"Poh! regard it with more cheerfulness;" exclaimed Sir Thomas; "for myself, I repeat to you, I like this sort of things. I am indebted to them for much success and *éclat*. They give a fellow, as I just observed to you, an air of courage and fierceness:—why damn

me, Sir," laughing immoderately, "his very shadow is afraid of a duellist!"

"Gad, that puts me in mind of a famous good thing I have heard," said Surrey:—"One of our most exquisite fashionists was passing through the lobby of Covent Garden;—always strong light you know,—quite thin just then,—and the shadow of his lordship with the *Salvator Rosa* head,—five-inch collar—same length and circumference of waist,—yard-wide cossacks—thrown in admirable perfection on the wall:—country-fellow—Squire, of course,—loud, ancient, and cursedly vulgar, passed by; 'Ecod,' said he, looking at the shadow of our *prime* friend, 'paid for the play, and a magic-lanthorn exhibition of ourang outangs, and every-day monkies, thrown in, gratis!'—By Jove, every body echoed his neighbour's laugh, and 'pon my soul, his lordship quite cut up. By all that's good, it's a positive fact!—Well, Sir Thomas, I always had an idea that this affair could never rest,—the

duel, I mean. And 'pon my soul, I have always been terribly afraid of it; for I am in much too good a station here, to think of fleeing my country."

"Flee your nonsense!" exclaimed the Baronet, half impatient, half laughing; "you shall make one at a glorious reconciliation dinner, instead of posting day and night, or tossing about in a fishing-smack.—Besides, my dear fellow, to disguise no part of the truth from you, I believe that nothing on earth could bring my principal into the field, but my solemn assurance, that he should come safe out of it.—A *bourgeois*, you know, and this his first season in the house,—consequently he would not die just after a successful contested election, whilst 'laurelled victory sits on his brow,' for immortality even! I see your instructions speak of five-and-thirty yards as a *sine quâ non*—a distance which, it is obvious, would render the bullets of the most expert shot perfectly harmless; and at one-fifth of which, neither of our he-

roes could fire into a church-porch. Why, zounds! to speak the honest truth, they would never be brought to send a ball against each other, unless one could take his ground in Mercury, and the other in the Georgium Sidus. No, no! trust me," continued the Baronet, ringing the bell for Madeira, "nothing shall be shed but INK; and we will share the *eclât* of the affair amongst us."

"With all my heart. I shall consent to any thing in the world but actual mischief, and consequent flight, and such like cursed bores, to which it would be ridiculous for a man to subject himself, if he could possibly avoid it."

"You are right;—that is a point ascertained beyond all debate. The only important consideration is the *eclât* of the affair. We must conduct the business with all appropriate solemnity and decorum;—as far remote as possible from the immortal Sir Andrew and Sir Toby in the play.—Oh, trust me, Sir, you have nothing to fear—nothing within the

bounds of possibility. I will put the affair *en train*: — In the first place, — just make a minute of it, — write a note to Doctor Pentonville; — desire him to be on the ground precisely at five o'clock to-morrow morning, with two or three tourniquets, as we dread a very bloody encounter. You understand this, Surrey, perfectly: his presence will give an air of reality and horror to the business, which, otherwise, it would never have possessed: — besides, he will be very useful, as voucher additional and extraordinary for the courage displayed by the parties; for they are so confoundedly well known, that there will need many witnesses, to make the public credulous as we desire. As for us, my good friend, we must load the pistols, and mark out the ground. I will then show you a little wicket gate, through which, by stooping in the slightest manner possible, we may all creep *ho-nor-a-bly* out of the business. And now, sir," continued Sir Thomas, filling his glass, and enjoying

the idea of the superior sagacity of his arrangements, "what think you of my plans? Are they not infinitely better than the scenes of war and bloodshed which you had pictured? Besides," pursued he, laughing, "duty calls imperiously on men placed in our situations, to moderate, as far as possible, the fiery energy of these desperate adversaries. Positively, they are as violent as your Spanish gallants, flourishing their naked sabres like walking-sticks; and like some of our earlier heroes, on failure of this cut-throat amusement at home, would start a crusade."

Poor Parolles was scarcely less embarrassed when pledged to fetch the drum, than were our valorous heroes on the dreadful morning of their encounter. Indeed it is somewhat singular, that under similar circumstances each had recourse to a similar expedient; namely, that of

going into the field, staying under a hedge for some time, and then returning. The firmest nerves must tremble at the approach of so critical a crisis; and if the desperate looks of the combatants were to be considered a criterion of judgment, a combat was likely to take place, as terrible in its nature and consequences, as that of immortal memory, between Bombastes Furioso and the renowned Fusbos. The boat of old Charon, and the sight of the Stygian lake, could scarcely have given to either a sharper pang, than the arrival of the chaise with the surgeon.—

Surrey had charitably, and in compliance with the golden rule, endeavoured to fortify the heart of his hero, by dispatching the following billet to him, on the evening previous:—

To Sir James Lawrence, Bart. M.P.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have just concluded all arrangements for your meeting:—observe, *for*

your meeting, and for *that only*. *Fire* you shall not, I pledge you my word and honour. Not a hair of your head shall be injured. We must make a few sacrifices *to eclât*, and lay the *foundation* of a devilish good *story*, the superstructure to be reared by me,

"SURREY."

The progress of the parties to the field rather resembled the measured "pomp of funeral array," than the advance of "lads of *ton*, who seek for fame!" Once, indeed, Mr. Gaveston endeavoured to animate *this pilgrimage to the shrine of honour*, by whistling the fag end of a merry catch; but it soon unconsciously resolved itself into the mournful tune of "the Dirge," in Cymbeline. — It was originally intended to have had the Doctor Pentonville, before mentioned, in the field. This gentleman was resident physician at a celebrated private madhouse; and it was not ill said of him, that his own stupidity was the best guarantee for his not being in-

fected by the distempers of his patients. He, however, politely declined the invitation, for "such an affair was not at all in his way." Surrey, on Pentonville's refusal, picked up the first "*offal lancer*" he could find, and bowled away with him to the appointed Golgotha. The arrival of the parties in the field has been well described by Dryden :—

With Palamon, above the rest in place,
Lycurgus came — the surly King of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face;
Big-boned, and large of limb, with sinews strong,
Broad-shouldered, and his arms were round and long.
He looked a lion with a gloomy stare;
And o'er his eyebrows hung his matted hair.

* * * * *

To match this monarch, with strong Arcite came
Emetrius, King of Inde, a mighty name!
Whene'er he spoke, his voice was heard around,
Loud as a trumpet with a silver sound!

* * * * *

Having arrived on the ground, the seconds proceeded to mark out the extremities of that bloody parallel, in which

the principals were to be opposed to each other. An awful pause succeeded, during which "the rack stood still, the wind was speechless, and the orb below, as hushed as death." The seconds retired to make their last communication, and Sir James was on the point of making use of Touchstone's stratagem, and taking up the quarrel with an *if*, when the whole ceremony was interrupted by the arrival of a carriage, from which a female rushed, with frantic gestures, to the scene of action. Two gentlemen on horseback arrived nearly at the same moment. The seconds paused in amazement, unable to account for so unexpected an intrusion. The real cause of it was, that Sir James Lawrence not depending on the assurance contained in Surrey's note, had very prudently sent a statement of the whole affair to Bow-street on the preceding night, whilst his opponent had taken the precaution to secure the interference of his wife.

Sir Thomas Clervaux immediately as-

sured all parties that the business was most amicably and honourably adjusted, Mr. Gaveston having affirmed, in the most qualified manner, that he did *not* say the honourable gentleman, his opponent, looked "as fierce as King Pepin on his chairing day;" whilst Sir James Lawrence had very handsomely declared, that the comparison of his adversary's "*nose to a shoeing-horn*," had originated with some evil-disposed person or persons, to the party unknown.

Nothing could be more satisfactory; the heroes returned, having completely established their reputation as "men of valour;" for *who* can doubt the courage of a duellist?

The principals and seconds engaged in this eventful action, partook of an excellent dinner at THE TIGER'S HEAD. Sir Thomas returned from it, repeating the Italian proverb, "*E méglio, ésser' "amici da lontàno che nemici d'apprésso.*"

"It is contended," wrote the Bishop to Grosvenor, on this subject,—"it is contended, that such a practice is requisite to enforce good order in society; that it avenges many injuries, of which the legislature could not possibly take cognizance; and the moralist laments its existence, whilst he half admits its necessity.

"But the Christian!—Is *he*, with all the glories of the Gospel dispensation, and the bright example of his divine Master in his view, is *he* to be told of its *necessity*?—Will *he* rush into the presence of his Maker, stained, like a second Cain, with his brother's blood?

"The gallant Colonel Gardiner, on being challenged, said, '*I am not afraid to die, but I fear to offend God!*' But a finished duellist fears *nothing*; he boldly sets *here and hereafter* 'upon a cast;' careless, he would tell you, 'of the hazard of the die!'

"Will you say to the Christian, that the pistol or the sword is to unbar the

portals of immortality. If *he* receives an injury, he is armed in proof; he has a weapon powerful as 'the sword of Michael from the armoury of God!'— it is THE WORD! There, on the rock of all his hopes, he finds inscribed by the finger of the Almighty, 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, AND I WILL REPAY!' Will he dispute the mandate of his Maker, and with frantic violence *avenge himself?*

"Look around you; do you see those eminent for their piety or learning—the benefactors and ornaments of mankind—engaged in affairs of this sort? He must, indeed, have seen little of the world who assumes such an action as *a proof of courage!* For it is in the power of every coward-ruffian occasionally to 'screw up his courage to the sticking-place!'"

To the Earl of Montague.

[Mr. Grosvenor commences this letter with the relation of the duel previously narrated; then continues:—]

"So much for the Dandy duellists! Now a word or two of the order itself!

"After all, the practice of a Dandy is very ancient; we read in the earliest records of the *body being girded* previously to any violent exertion: although it must be admitted that the present fashion precludes the possibility of exertion, as a finished dandy is nearly as inflexible as a lamp-post. 'Let thine eyes look straight before thee,' is an injunction he most strictly observes: it is, in fact, next to impossible he should infringe it, unless nature should have enlarged his sphere of vision by subtending the angle laterally.

"As to their hair, they who suppose the present fashion derived its origin from the mane of a Shetland poney, labour under an error. It is of much higher antiquity; and was so prevalent in the time of David, that we read of Absalom's having two hundred shekels of hair cut off at one time, and *he* was

admitted to be one of the most finished gentlemen of his day.

"According to Plutarch, Alcibiades was a fine specimen of dress — a sort of leader of the *haut ton* in Athens — an exquisite! Like the dandies of our own day, he affected foreign manners; and had, in short, transplanted into his carriage all the folly of his age, native and exotic. We find that the Persian spy who was sent to reconnoitre the Spartans, reported them to be adornizing their persons and combing their hair: do not, however, suspect me of supposing, for one moment, that Thermopylæ was defended by DANDIES!

"This species seems to have flourished and declined as the opinion of some leading character was favourable or otherwise to the elementary accomplishments that distinguish it. Plato was favourable to the system, and, in his commonwealth recommends the establishment of dancing schools, the very hot-beds of the *dandy*, an art as necessary to his existence as is

the sunbeam to that of the cucumber. Cicero, on the contrary, ridicules the practice, and declares that '*nemo saltat sobrius!*' 'Who shall decide when doctors disagree?' That this fashion annoyed Horace, we may infer from his censure of it. Juvenal ridicules them continually; Ovid absolutely introduces a dandy *shewing off.*

Chlamydemque ut pendeat apte,
Collocat ut limbus totum appareat aurum.

"To come nearer our own day, we find, in Richard the second's time, the toes of the dandies were so elevated, that the interference of the legislature was found necessary to prevent their kicking each others eyes out. Some care of the person is, however, absolutely praiseworthy; and as taste claims exclusively the direction of this feeling, we need not wonder that there is some degree of uncertainty, among the votaries of so fickle a divinity.

"The Greeks, *not those of the present*

day, derived the fashion from Egypt, the Romans from Greece, and the importation of this fastidious commodity has in later ages been reciprocal: this traffic, it is true, is principally confined to minds of an inferior class,—at least, I never remember to have known a man of acknowledged abilities, who suffered himself to be cast, at will, into any mould his taylor might think proper, and changed from one to another, as rapidly as the signal boards of a telegraph. The despotism of fashion is principally exercised over those who have little chance of being otherwise distinguished.

"All that is left to a mind naturally imbecile, is to become obtrusively ridiculous. By this means only, it can enjoy the pleasure of notoriety; and as far as their different capacities are calculated for enjoyment, the pleasure is the same in the monarch who is applauded for his prowess, and the fool that he keeps for his amusement. Applause is the object of a dandy; it is to be sought in dress,

and thence arises the importance of studying his appearance. For this, he voluntarily submits to have his form distorted by artificial pressure. Latitude and longitude are to him of more consequence when applied to his coat, than to the orb upon which he exists. His belt, like that of a planet, is a very principal distinction, from the unfashionable canaille with which he is surrounded.

It was in agitation at Oxford, I hear, to issue a coinage with the impress of a dandy on one side, and, on the reverse, the hunting-belt and a pair of stays, with an inscription,

O Corydon, Corydon, quæ te dementia cepit!

The scheme, however, failed, on account of the die-sinker's having completely obscured the countenance by the shirt-collar. The idea originated with the present Lord ——'s chaplain, a very profound fellow, I assure you; *for*, his acquirements are buried, like the husbandman's gold, so cunningly, he could not find it himself; whose cap and gown

go so far to make a gentleman, as a pair of wings would to make an angel:—a clerical cormorant, who gets a degree stuck in the front of his name, like the man in the moon, for being at work on a Sunday!

"That mature dandy Doctor ——— is dead, and some mischievous fellow has published a character of him, from which I give you an extract:—'To see him 'crossing the college-green always gave 'me the idea of a Dutch lugger dis- 'masted. He was,' continues his bio- grapher, 'a sort of word-hunting genius 'who, like the fellow that Boethius tells 'us of, winnowed the wheat with his 'fingers, and had the chaff given him 'for his pains. In short, Doctor ——— 'had as much power over the alphabet 'as the Spanish magician had over the 'infernal spirits when he marshalled 'them in alphabetical order, and then 'dismissed them, having bottled up their 'ring-leader.'

"The very antipodes of the dandy

tribe — the cool assassin, Colonel ——— has, I have great satisfaction in announcing, departed from this island, to seek a grander theatre for the display of his magnificent exploits. Charles the XIIth was not more hardened than this rascal; the drawing of a cork, or the explosion of a mine, were the same to him; the fall of a mighty monarch from his throne, or that of a mandarin from the chimney-piece, affected him equally. I believe he would have shrunk no more from the convulsion of an earthquake than from the trembling of a shape of *blanc-mange* on the supper-table. Murder was familiar to him: it is sufficient for a stylish fellow to have killed his man; I believe *this* ruffian had signed the passports of a dozen! He would have thrust his sword through the heart of a man with as little compunction as an author dashes his pen through a superfluous participle!

"Congratulate me, my lord: I have begun to study man. The task is less

arduous, and more amusing, than I expected.

"I am always
"Your lordship's most obliged,
"HENRY W. GROSVENOR."

To Lady Augusta Kingston.

"I am sadly at fault;—do you think I started too much game? or were my hounds bad? or am I no longer so expert a shot?—My birds have flown away;—how, read:—

"I started the Nabob at full cry, as you advised, and was rapidly gaining on him. Nothing would do with him but Lady Jane; and poor, dear, dull, disagreeable Miss Wodehouse, (admire the alliteration,) was beginning to look exceedingly blank on the matter. You know me well enough to be aware, that envy always acts as a whet on my appetite; and the Nabob and I became better friends than ever; and poor Margaret read us *every-day lectures* on common-

sense, decorum, punctilio, and the whole host of *the bores*, without ceasing. I quizzed her, and the Nabob laughed; and you know how much depends on the discovery of the means to make man laugh continually. He laughed himself into love. Natural enough that: sighs have had their day, as the man in the play says, and it is time we brought something else into vogue. Well, I had brought him to the very point, and, deuce take the perversity of my nature, I lost him! Patience; and you shall know it all.

"I actually had received the offer; and with all the due decorum of pretty modesty, and affected humility, had postponed giving a final answer until the following morning. Well, as the devil would have it, who should come to dine but Horatio Somerset, Captain of the Ariadne, my ancient acquaintance, and quondam lover!

"And what had the fellow to do with my Nabob? *My* Nabob, that ought to

have been? Why, in faith, good coz, nothing—but the perversity of woman: it is my misfortune, that with all my politics, and my talents, I have been all my life, that silly, silly animal, a very woman! The perversity of my womanhood, then, overthrew, in one hour, all those excellent plans it had taken Lady Jane Lorn so many months to bring to bear!

"Somerset, I cannot write the wretch's name legibly—Somerset was accompanied by an old, and '*has been*' sort of woman, whom they called Mrs. Belgrave, widow of Colonel Belgrave, or some such kind of man. I could have forgiven this *Madame*, the *mal-a-propos*, *hors-du-tems*, of her presence, if she had not thought proper to bring with her an affected, frightful-looking sort of beauty, whom she called Miss Grace Belgrave.

"I looked at my Nabob, and found, to my great satisfaction, he was occupied with his soup, and apparently forgetful of the existence of this Miss Grace. Well by the contrivance of some imp

who has a particular spite against me, Horatio was placed between this child and myself. He looked at her with those meaning glances, which you and I so well understand; called her, in an under tone, his '*dear Grace,*' and—and you know a woman hates to see a slave, who once bowed to her empire, courting the laws of another; and so — out it must come — I set my tactics in array against her's, and the poor thing shrank in dismay from the competition.

"I rallied, flattered, laughed at, soothed, sighed at, and conversed with Horatio, keeping the enemy at bay in the finest style imaginable. What expense of wit was I at! and I followed up the game regardless of the '*looks askaunce,*' with which my Nabob and the ugly Margaret regarded us.

"Well, in the evening, I saw Horatio walking in one of the plantations; I bounded after him with all the agility, for which I was so remarkable in the day of the dear lamented teens. We talked of '*auld lang syne;*' until, in the

distance, appeared the light form of that villainous sylph, whom I have introduced to you by the name of Grace.

"Horatio saw her; he became cold, dull, and listless; I sighed, looked pathetic, he frowned—how a second love revives the remembrance of the injuries one received in a first!—he began to enumerate all the misery I had entailed upon him, the deceptions which I had imposed on him, until, upon my soul, I could verily have blushed.

"But luckily I did not; I rebutted his accusations. I had recourse to the most skilful sophistry, which I imagined might confuse his reason, and obscure the plainest truth. What talents did I not display? What eloquence, what grace of gesture, what animation of innocence, indignant at false accusation?—I placed the success of the game in the gaining of one single trick; and, Augusta, I lost it.

"The wretch heard me with inconceivable coolness;—'your ladyship has

great talents,' he said sarcastically, 'but after all your manœuvres, your argument is making lee-way.'—He turned on his heel, and two minutes after, I saw him at the side of this Grace.

"What need is there of more words? My Nabob was jealous, and discovered the whole. I departed,—am at ——, as you see by the post-mark, and in a few days, you may expect me in London.

"I shall certainly sue Clervaux;—there is now no earthly consideration to prevent me;—if great damages are awarded, they will form no ignoble dower. I have not yet lost all hope; whilst men can still be flattered, and caressed, and rallied into love, ought Jane Lorn to despair?

"Let Montague look to it;—I have an eye on him and his Miss Argyle.—Disappointed, baffled, how amply should I be repaid by vengeance!

"I shall consult my old admirer counsellor M——— on the case; he has enough law knowledge to ensure the

success of my suit; and enough simplicity of character to become a second time my dupe.

"Expect me in a very few days. I am not quite in despair. I do not forget, that I am still the all-conquering

"JANE LORN."

CHAP. IX.

Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

The voice said, cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof, as the flower of the field.

ISAIAH.

Can I forget the dismal night, that gave
My soul's best part for ever to the grave!
How silent did his old companions tread,
By midnight lamps, the mansions of the dead;
Through breathing statues, then unheeded things;
Through rows of warriors, and through walks of kings!
What awe did the slow, solemn knell inspire;
The pealing organ, and the pausing choir;
The duties by the lawn-robed prelate payed;
And the last words that *dust to dust* conveyed!
While speechless o'er thy closing grave we bend,
Accept these tears, thou dear, departed friend!
Oh, gone for ever, take this long adieu;
And sleep in peace, next thy loved Montague!

HEBER.

LORD Montague one evening returned from an exquisite musical entertainment given by the Duchess of ——. In the course of it, he

Had felt by turns his glowing mind,
Roused, delighted, wrapt, refin'd;

and he sought his own apartment with a gaiety and lightness of heart he did not often experience.

Insensibly he fell into a profound reverie, and his prospect of the future appeared tinged with the same pleasurable hue. He saw in his mind's eye the vivid picture of those scenes and countries he hoped to traverse, and the sensation, at intervals, was that of rapture. The pleasure he had derived from such a life in his earlier years, rushed again upon his fancy; it was a delicious pageant, and for a time occupied his mind, to the exclusion of every other idea. His separation from the land of his birth, Isadora, all were forgotten. It was a fairy vision, and imparted a luminous brilliancy to his eye, which spoke his heart drunk with its intoxicating influence, as he exclaimed to himself—

Me into distant realms my fate conveys,
Through regions fruitful in immortal lays.

The past, the present, and the future, were embodied in one delightful vision. His immortal spirit manifested itself in all its splendour, and

Saw blooming in her mental May,
A thousand years as yesterday.

In the midst of these exhilarating images of fancy, the following letter was brought to him by an express:—

To the Earl of Montague.

"MY DEAR LORD,

"You are not ignorant, that for some months, my health has been in a precarious and very delicate state. It has at length taken a decided turn, and indicates a speedy and total decay of the lungs. My physician is an honest man, and he has confessed to me that a very short period will, in all human probability, terminate my existence here on

earth. It is more than possible that this letter is the last I shall ever be able to write to you; but I trust, that unless very cogent reasons prevent it, I shall again see and converse with you.

"Your society, your correspondence, and your friendship, have rendered happy that portion of my life, which succeeded the commencement of our acquaintance. Suffer me, then, to lean upon your friendly arm, whilst I descend into the grave. Yes, my lord, I reflect with satisfaction, that you will deposit me in the sepulchre, in the full and certain hope of a glorious immortality; and I pray Heaven, that we may hereafter renew, in a far happier state of being, that intercourse which we have enjoyed in this world.

"In life and death, I am

"Your's,

"———."

The tear rolled down the manly cheek of Lord Montague, as he remained mo-

tionless, with his eyes fixed on the letter. It was a blow which he had not anticipated, and for some moments it overwhelmed him with amazement. He revolved, in rapid succession, all the pleasing hours he had passed in the society of his friend, from the morning of their acquaintance, when, with the lovely Argyle, he was the guest of Mr. Walworth. At no time, had the conversation, the correspondence of the Bishop, been so dear or appeared so valuable to him. It is the nature of man to appreciate most highly that which he is about to lose, and then only to appreciate it justly.

The next evening saw Lord Montague at the Palace of the Bishop. Though possessing that firmness of nerve, which always accompanies high health and vigour, Lord Montague could not controul the powerful agitation that shook him, as he approached the chamber of his dying friend.

The departing prelate was dictating to

his sorrowing chaplain, a man venerable for his years and goodness, who contemplated with calm grief the thorns of that couch on which he might be extended on the morrow, a prayer which was to be used in his diocese on the restoration of peace. Lord Montague listened attentively: the enfeebled voice of the Bishop uttered, with that affecting solemnity, which always distinguished it, —

" O Lord God Almighty, in whose
" hands are the issues of all things, and
" before whom the nations are but as
" 'dust upon the balance;' accept, we
" beseech thee, the prayers and praises
" of the British people for that deliver-
" ance which thy power has vouchsafed
" to them, for that victory thou hast
" granted to their arms, and for all those
" blessings thy bounty has bestowed on
" them. Thou, O Lord, hast been our
" refuge in the day of battle, preserve
" us in the hour of triumph. Thou hast
" brought us forth like thy chosen Israel;
" grant to us also, Lord, the guiding

" pillar of thy grace. Thy countenance
" was our buckler in the day of our
" adversity; teach us now, O Lord,
" moderation in our success." * * *

Lord Montague had gazed on the sunken eye and attenuated countenance, —had listened to the altered voice of the Bishop: both contributed to overpower him; he sank on one knee by the couch, and buried his face in the extended hand of his friend, whose moving lips faintly articulated a prayer for the future welfare of Lord Montague.

" To see you so soon," said the Bishop, after a very long pause, " is a pleasure I did not dare to anticipate. Ah, my lord, *this* is indeed the friendship one desires without expecting!"

" Who shall dare to calculate on the future?" exclaimed Lord Montague, in accents of sorrow: " at the very moment I received your letter, I was picturing to myself many future hours of enjoyment in your society! and to find you thus ——"

"It is the lot of man," said the Bishop, calmly; "and I am grateful to the Almighty, that in my case, the approach of death is without pain, and attended by many alleviating circumstances. It is a blessing to be supported in this trying hour by your lordship's presence. I hope also to see Miss Argyle, to whom, as well as to Grosvenor and Lady Anne, I have dispatched couriers."

A faint glow flashed over the countenance of Lord Montague, as he arose and seated himself by the side of the Bishop; it was inseparable from the unexpected mention of Isadora: perhaps the heart is never more susceptible of love, than when softened by distress; and Lord Montague felt, that to be associated with her in paying the last melancholy attentions to their mutual friend, would be more delightful, as far as regarded himself and Isadora, than any former event of his life.

Miss Argyle arrived; she and Lord Montague were re-united; and though

they felt the afflicting melancholy of the circumstances that had hastened their re-union, they could not be insensible to the pleasure of it.

Isadora loving the Bishop with filial affection, was frequently unable to control the excess of her sorrow; and only the soothing of Lord Montague could restore her calmness.

The exhausted state of the sufferer required frequent intervals of repose; the intervening periods were spent in prayer, and in conversation with his friends.

"I contemplate," said he, "the awful change I am about to undergo with more calmness at present, than I have ever done formerly. In early life, I spent much time in investigating the evidences for the truth of christianity; the result was, an entire conviction of the authenticity of the Gospel Dispensation. On that rock I build my every hope; from that spring, I have derived consolation and fortitude under every

calamity. In that painful hour when Adelaide was removed from me by death, resting all her hopes on the infinite mercy of God, and the sacrifice of the Saviour! I saw her breathe her soul into the hands of him who gave it with resignation and tranquillity. I felt it was but the separation of a season; and the bright prospect of being re-united hereafter, to those we have loved so tenderly here, deprives death of half his terrors."

"Ah, yes!" said Miss Argyle warmly; "and such a hope bears the impress of Heaven! Or where should the wretched find repose?—where the bereaved look for consolation?—And what brighter prospect can the future present, than that we shall be associated through eternity, in acts of adoration, with those who have ever been most dear to us? Perhaps," she continued with enthusiasm,

Perhaps there may be a boon in heaven,
To wretched mortals sometimes given,

That those in foreign lands who die,
May seek again their native sky ;
Ere yet the disembodied soul
Has reached her final, destined goal : —
Free, for a fleeting space, to rove
Each earthly scene that owned their love !
To float around each sable form,
That shrouds a heart with anguish torn !
To view, in turn, each dearer friend,
In widowed desolation bend !
To read their loss in each fond eye,
And watch the tear they cannot dry !
To hear their own sad requiem sound,
Invisible to all around ! —
Then grateful for the bliss thus given
Return to wait the doom of Heaven ! —

There was a pathos of melancholy in her voice, a melting softness in her dark eye, as she uttered this, which made the heart of Lord Montague thrill with the almost painful ecstacy of unutterable tenderness.

" I am not aware," he said gently, " that we are expressly told in Scripture, that we shall be again known to each other, though I think the general tenor of our Lord's conversation strongly implies it."

"It has been one great error of the church in all ages," said the Bishop, "to employ its speculation on points that were doubtless left in darkness for the best and wisest purposes. I think with your lordship, that although there is no express declaration on these points we may plainly infer it. The words of the Redeemer to the dying thief on the cross, the promises to the Apostles, all imply a state of recognition: and though in reply to the Sadducees, He plainly declares that those ties which bind us to each other on earth are unknown in heaven, yet when we consider a state of being, in which the mind is purified and sublimed from earthly feelings, we must rationally conclude that such ties are no longer necessary."

It was in such conversation that the day had passed; and Lord Montague retired to rest with that solemn tone of

feeling which a death-bed generally excites in an elevated mind.

In consequence of an alarming change, he was summoned at midnight to the Bishop's apartment. He was in a state of insensibility, with the hand of the nearly fainting Isadora firmly clasped in his own. Lord Montague flew to her side; he supported—consoled—revived her.

When the Bishop recovered perception, he regarded them alternately. They kneeled together by the side of his couch. The rosy lips of Isadora pressed his forehead. He smiled with benignant composure: "Ah, my lord!" said he, "it is nearly over, and I shall not see Grosvenor: be to him what we have been to each other; be his guide — his friend.

"Isadora," he continued, placing the hand he still grasped in that of Lord Montague, "you will, you must be happy!" and again he relapsed into insensibility.

"We are thine, Lord, for thou hast

made us; forsake not the work of thine hands!" These were the last words he uttered; and without a groan he breathed his spirit into eternity.

For many minutes Lord Montague held the trembling hand of Isadora in speechless emotion; until warned by the marble paleness of her countenance, he bore her from the apartment.

Grosvenor arrived in time to witness the interment of the Bishop. Fashion had no power over Isadora to withhold her from paying the last affectionate tribute to his memory, and supported by Lord Montague, she saw all that remained on earth of her venerable friend deposited in the tomb of his fathers.

Isadora retired immediately to her seat of Harwell-Castle, and Lord Montague settled for some time at Plymouth.

CHAP. X.

Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love!
Hearts that the world in vain had tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied;
That stood the storm, when waves were rough,
Yet in a sunny hour fall off,
Like ships, that have gone down at sea,
When heaven was all tranquillity!
A something, light as air—a look,
A word unkind or wrongly taken—
Oh! love, that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch like this hath shaken.

MOORE.

To Miss Argyle.

"MADAM,

"I do not apologise for addressing this letter to you; the purport will explain the necessity and importance of it. If, after its perusal, you shall still think an apology requisite, I beg of you to give me credit for the most humble one imaginable.

"Lord Montague is selected by Miss

Argyle to engross her love — her heart's best affections! I repeat this continually: yet why should I doubt the possibility? Is he not grand, imposing, and specious, as man *can* be? Is there a heart which he cannot deceive—which is not willing to trust in him, love him, adore him, to be broken by him? Lord Montague is not a man to be repulsed:—who dares doubt the grandeur, the sublimity of his mind? who, in his presence, does not shrink into something inferior to the being he really is? on whom does not his commanding exterior impose? who has not forgotten human fallibility in listening to, and observing him?

"Some years have elapsed since *I* was the favoured object of his lordship's regard. Yes: this wan form, this languid eye, this broken spirit, once possessed beauty, fire, and vivacity to attract a love which I would have died to retain? Oh, who that has once basked in the beams of that love, ever recovered from the chilling misery that succeeded the withdrawing of those beams? It is like

the star of Canopus, whose influence prevents the intrusion of care and sorrow on those happy few on whom it shines! Alas, madam! none can justly appreciate the misery of desertion, but those who have felt the delight of reciprocal passion.

"Lady of England — happy, happy object of Montague's love, of Montague's wishes — canst thou, thus high in happiness, reject the prayer of the forsaken and miserable!

"Madam, my son is the child of Lord Montague! It is for this boy—this lovely miniature of his father—this young reflection of his high qualities and transcendant endowments — that I would plead with you! Oh, what can I ask for myself in your power to grant? Can you minister—all angel as you must be—to the woes of the heart-broken, the hopeless, and the ruined? Can you relieve the sorrow that rejects consolation, — that turns disdainfully from the prospect of alleviation? You may conquer difficulties, but you cannot effect impos-

sibilities;—you may retain the love of Lord Montague, but you cannot console the heart that has survived his desertion!

"Separated from the object of a first, an only, and, perhaps, a guilty love, I have existed with no other consolation than the recollection of what *has* been, and the soothing conviction that Lord Montague still remembers me with friendship. Yet,—oh let me not forget my boy—my only hope of future happiness, my dearest comfort, my heart's best supporter! Without him, how could I traverse the desert soil of this earth's wilderness?—*he* procures for me those munificent proofs of his still adored father's regard, which, as coming from him, constitute, at once, my existence, and my blessing.

For this boy, my too happy rival!—alas, madam, forgive the epithet that equalizes you with me! exalted as you are in rank, in happiness, in virtue, you are yet the possessor of that heart which I have so fruitlessly striven to retain, and,

therefore, appear in this light, only, to my tortured view; — for this boy, then, my too happy rival, behold me at your feet! — prostrate before you, I plead for him in agony of supplication! I resign myself to your disposal; — dictate terms to me the most severe that humanity can endure, and yet bid me live to bleed under them; — take from me the privilege of complaint; — bid me seem happy and boast of my felicity; — bid me tear from my heart the worshipped image of its idol — I obey! no sacrifice is too great, no torment too exquisite, to be compensated by the blessing I beg at your hands.

"Lady, you know not a mother's hopes, a mother's fears — a mother's delights, and a mother's agonies! But if, in future years, these sensations shall divide your heart with *him* — the Montague, who reigns there; if, encircled by a group of blooming innocents, in whose smiling eyes you discover the intelligence of their father's spirit, you contemplate with a prophetic eye the brilliancy of their fu-

ture life, then you will recollect the misery that must have rent the heart of her, who, covered with humiliation, at this moment addresses you: *then* you will weep the woes of this unhappy being — then you will commend the result of a conflict between pride and maternal affection — between love for the betrayer, and tenderness for the guiltless youth who owes his existence to him!

" And yet this tenderness, all-powerful as it is, would have been sacrificed to the happiness of his father, if, for a moment, I imagined that this information would obstruct his happiness. But no!—you, lady, will not fear the influence of the poor wretch whose love betrayed her into crime! your virtues, your beauty, your graces, and your rank, will equally preserve you from desertion! Alas! once *I* had all these — once I was pre-eminent in each! but *love* undid me; love hurled me from my elevation; I adored — was deserted, and undone!

"'Ah, Heaven! how dare I expect that you should pity a parent's agonies! Was not *I* deaf to them! Did I not listen to a mother's prayers and a father's curse with indifference? Oh, will not that strong curse pursue me? Will it not surround my devoted child and shut it out from sympathy and assistance? Oh! how heavily has that malediction fallen on my head! Yet I endure it—the whole weight of it; and still pray Heaven to bless him who brought it on me! Forgive me, lady: the blow has been heavy, and I still writhe beneath it.

"I supplicate for my son: save him, madam, from the obscurity that threatens him; place him in a situation to which he is entitled by birth, by talents, and by a concentration of those high endowments, that stamp him of the line of Montague!

"I inclose my address: condescend to *see* me: I need not ask you to keep this application secret from Lord Montague! What could be gained from a disclosure?

Under the influence of love, would he admit a fact which might obstruct his happiness? Alas, madam! you need not be assured that he would not.

"I supplicate for an interview; the manner of it, you will direct.

"The unhappy

"EMMA!"

Miss Argyle read this letter with the most overwhelming emotions — emotions not a little increased by the conviction that her very existence depended on the love of Lord Montague.

What a moment was this! He was displayed to her as a betrayer, and a deserter of the woman, whom he had so betrayed!

What numberless coincidences were suggested to her mind, to stamp the narrative with truth! The deserted, the unhappy Emma was the unfortunate heroine of those poems to which accident had introduced her. Her idea had imparted that peculiar manner to Lord

Montague, which she had hitherto considered the effect of his knowledge of the world. What an unhappy combination! what a train of reasoning it induced!

Whilst she was yet undetermined how to act, her breast torn by the conflicting emotions of love, anger, and pity — shrinking from the contemplation of the state of her own heart — dismayed to find how strongly the image of Lord Montague was impressed there — so strongly that it seemed to triumph over every other feeling — that very Lord Montague entered.

The manner of Isadora assumed a coldness, which she could not repress; her heart involuntarily closed against him, and a frigid bow answered his animated salutation.

Lord Montague started, rather grieved than offended, yet in his grief preserving a shade of haughtiness never totally distinct from any trait of his character; he delivered to her the message with which

he was charged by Lady Anne Grosvenor.

Isadora listened with an air of abstraction, and when he had finished, turned away, without reply.

Lord Montague sighed heavily; Isadora looked at him earnestly, and, for an instant, forgot the unfortunate Emma.

"My lord," she began; — he turned round; — she lost the power of proceeding.

"Alas, Isadora, how have I offended you?" said he, in a voice of tender intreaty.

He spoke to her with surpassing eloquence; he laid open his whole heart to her view; it was the eloquence of a lover, free, characteristic, and unstudied: there were no finely rounded periods, nor affectation of flowery oratory; the heart dictated, and the language of the heart is simple, beautiful, and fascinating.

The letter, the fatal letter, pleaded powerfully against him. Ought she to

show it to him, freely confess her doubts, and demand an explanation?

The writer appeared most unhappy, and the unhappy were deserving of the greatest delicacy. She had begged concealment; she had solicited, above all, that Lord Montague might not be informed of her application.

But was the request of an anonymous being to be observed with such scrupulous delicacy? was she to be placed in competition with the happiness of two beings, which her information, unless controverted, must destroy for ever?

Was she—this degraded female—by herself acknowledged to be degraded—to possess sufficient power over the mind of Miss Argyle as to induce her to believe all the letter asserted, in direct contradiction to her own experience and observation.

Was she to reject Lord Montague on the information of a nameless individual, who had offered assertion for proof, and

whose chief claim to belief was the pathetic style of her address?

Was she to believe Lord Montague a seducer, a deserter, instead of the noble, dignified character, whom the Bishop of ——— had been proud to call his friend; who had restored Grosvenor to virtue and to happiness; whom — yes — whom Isadora Argyle loved with before-unimagined ardour?

These considerations passed rapidly over her mind; — in an instant the letter was in the hand of Lord Montague.

He read it over calmly; she observed his countenance with much anxiety, and some apprehension. "*Does* such a power of deceiving belong to man? or is he, — oh, is he innocent?"

He returned the letter with a coldness that shocked her: "You believed these assertions, madam?" he said, with great haughtiness.

"I have not dared yet to believe them, my lord!" said Isadora, colouring

deeply, and looking at him with a mixture of doubt, agitation, and alarm.

"But you were inclined to do it!—an *anonymous* correspondent? You will allow me to re-peruse that letter?" Then running it over, he commented on it. "Exceedingly *necessary*, and very *important*, doubtless! This Emma really makes herself a very considerable personage! *She does not apologize*! *some* people would have thought that what follows might render apology necessary!

"Am I, indeed, the happy object she supposes me? If her supposition be correct, her regard for the happiness of Miss Argyle is not demonstrated very clearly, and *some* might think her information obtrusive and impertinent. She has contrived to dash the annexed magnificent portrait of myself with a few strong shades of deceit and speciousness; notwithstanding, it was sufficient to prove to Miss Argyle that in uniting herself to the original she would not entirely lose all chance of happiness! No! but then

Miss Argyle, by being suffered to remain in blissful ignorance, would have had a chance of *greater* happiness, by the absence of those doubts and suspicions to which this information must naturally give rise; and it appears, that the *unhappy Emma* was not inclined to permit it!

"Some years have elapsed since *she* was the favoured object of Lord Montague! You will allow that that is shrewd enough. It is better than some *months* since, because it supposes a period in which I had not the honour of knowing Miss Argyle; and as it may reasonably be denominated one of the excesses of youth, she would the more readily be induced to give credence to it, than if it had been dated at a period when *she* had some knowledge of me, and consequently might be supposed no incapable judge of what my conduct would possibly be at that time.

"'*Who that has once basked in the*

beams of that love, ever recovered from the chilling misery that succeeded the withdrawing of those beams?' — Alas, madam! this is a very skilful impostor, or one who knows perfectly well *what* is love!

" '*Happy, happy object of Montague's love — of Montague's wishes!*' — *Happy* in the love of a seducer and deserter! — I do not know, madam, how these contradictions are to be reconciled! — The fair Emma alone can elucidate.

" She pleads for her son — for the miniature of his father — the reflection of his high qualities and transcendant endowments! — A great inducement this! — This promising scion is a villain, a seducer, a deserter of one female, and the would-be deceiver of another — in miniature! — Excellent consistency! — high-sounding pretensions to the favour of Miss Argyle.

" She allows the possibility that you may '*retain the love of the fickle Mon-*



tague;' and very kindly takes away the desire by the information she volunteers!

"'*Separated from the object of a first, an only, and, perhaps, a guilty love!*'—*Perhaps* a guilty love!—PERHAPS!—If not *guilty*, by what title *would* she designate it?—*Guilty* in her—and, in her betrayer, dreadful, horrible, and damnable!

"'*The soothing conviction, that Lord Montague remembers her with friendship!*'—And this *friendship*, the conviction of which is so *soothing*, she hazards by a disclosure that can be productive of no possible good to her!—For if this letter obtain the desired end—the *palpably* desired end—that is, the separation of Lord Montague and Miss Argyle, what interest can Miss Argyle be hoped to take in the illegitimate son of that Lord Montague?—You perceive, madam, that we cannot give this Emma great credit for *delicacy*, or this consequence would have suggested itself

to her. On the other hand, if Miss Argyle became the wife of Lord Montague, will *he* remember with friendship the being whose zeal had well nigh severed that union?—I should imagine not; and thus, either way, the unfortunate Emma loses the *soothing conviction* of his friendship!

"RIVAL!!—This is beyond endurance!—Infernal impostor!—Madam, malice could not have suggested a finer idea for the completion of this project!—There is nothing more likely to make the heart of a virtuous female recoil in horror from the man who woos her, than the bare possibility of her being the *rival* of his mistress—of a being so lost and degraded!—Every *virtuous* woman must feel *this;* but doubly would it strike on the soul of a *high-minded one,* who proudly disdains the idea of being the rival of *any!*—If this pretended rival had been virtuous, and unfortunate only in my fickleness, I might have insulted you; if I had been assured of



your love, I might have *tortured* you, by saying 'that such an accusation reflected dishonour on no man; on the contrary, that any one might be *proud* to have his name so coupled!' and you would *justly* then have spurned me; for that which, in *some* circumstances, is not dishonourable, in others is base and horrible! — In *this* case you would have shrunk from me, you would have spurned the heart I offered to you, and it would have been just! — I confess, madam, that you ought to despise the man who would place you in the light of any woman's rival. Be that woman good, and excellent, and fair, and lovely, she *cannot* be worthy of the exaltation we attach to the idea of the rival of Miss Argyle! — The case is otherwise, madam: and you owe me reparation for having harboured a surmise most debasing to yourself, and most unjust, most injurious, most horrible in regard to me! . . .

"The succeeding part of this paragraph is composed of pathetic periods,

and humiliating situations, artfully enough imagined and combined. She endeavours to interest *your* humanity by *her own* humility! She is a skilful engineer; but the range of her artillery has not been calculated with sufficient accuracy.

" '*Lady, you know not*' — what a picture! — Alas! madam: and she who has abilities to paint so well, wants feeling to appreciate the beauty of her picture. and, with the hand of a dæmon, dashes the untasted cup from the lips of those who die for it, and laughs, in triumph, at the agony she occasions.

" '*This tenderness, all-powerful as it* '*is, would have been sacrificed to the hap-* '*piness of his father, if, for a moment, I* '*imagined that this information would ob-* '*struct his happiness!*' — What a palpable falsehood! — She knew that Miss Argyle was too dignified, too noble, too delicate, to encourage the addresses of the libertine and the seducer! — A wanton insult is implied. Madam, I have

your cause to avenge with my own. Her next sentence is well conceived enough: she mentions some traits that distinguish you, as securing you from the possibility of desertion, and then asserts that *she* was once *pre-eminent* — that is her word — *pre-eminent* in each of these, and yet undone! — An asserted *impossibility* practically proved to be *possible!* — I am not casuist enough to explain away this sophistry.

"The fanciful distresses of her supposititious parents are well introduced in the next paragraph. These minute traits give an air of truth to the whole: nothing *can* be better imagined!

"She supplicates for *her son* — that he may be removed from obscurity into elevation and splendour! — A very modest request, the acknowledged illegitimacy of his birth being taken into account! — And you, madam, are to have the honour of introducing into a higher sphere '*this concentration of those high endowments, that stamp him of the line of*

Montague!' — I think, madam, if *I* had been the receiver of a letter like this, the impudence of this request would alone have been sufficient to stagger my belief in it!

" '*I need not ask you to keep this application secret from Lord Montague!'* And why *need* she not? Was it so *certain* that you would not disclose it to me, our situation being considered? '*What would be gained from a disclosure?'* she asks with impudent assurance. What indeed! —why, nothing but the very end that must defeat all her plans — *detection and exposure!* '*Under the influence of love, would he admit a fact which might obstruct his happiness?'* Not if he were the character she supposes him, most assuredly! — falsehood would, in that case, be his decided characteristic; and, of course, in such a situation, he would not hesitate to exert it. '*She supplicates for an interview!'* but she never for an instant supposed that you would grant it, aware that, by your doing so, her end

would be defeated by the discovery of imposture!

"I think, madam, you will allow that this is a fair comment on the text before us; not distorted or misapplied, but adapted to it, and naturally deducible from it. And yet—

"*I* can bear witness to your usual penetration, Isadora; to the facility with which you detect imposture, and to the little credence you are accustomed to yield to assertion, more especially to *anonymous* assertion, unsupported by evidence.

"In this instance only, you have admitted the assertions of an unknown; and condemned, with a precipitancy and facility hitherto uncharacteristic of you, a man whose every hope of happiness rested in you! Alas, madam! what inference am I to draw—what conclusion to form, from such premises? what other than that you were *eager* to think unworthily of me, and to sever those delightful links which have lately united us!

"You have roused me from a delicious dream, in which I should have been glad to slumber a little longer. Why, why have I adored you so madly! Why have I thrilled in tenderness at the confession of your love for me!—Only to prove that the assertions of an anonymous assassin could stagger your faith in me!

"For my own peace sake, for the redemption of my honour from that stain which blots it, I shall seek for, and I do not despair of discovering, this wanton assassin. You will confide this letter to me?"

Isadora, continually changing colour, trembling, and agitated, had not the power of replying. Lord Montague imputed her silence to another motive.

"You do not doubt my honour, madam?" he said, almost sternly.

The eyes of Isadora swam in tears. "Why will you always misunderstand me!" she faintly articulated.

Lord Montague looked at her with

tender earnestness: he approached; he took both her hands in his: "Any thing but this, Isadora, I could have forgotten —forgiven! God bless you! forget, *for the present*, that this morning ever had existence."

"*For the present*, my lord!" said she, rising with dignity, and disengaging herself from him: "not only for the present, but for ever! Adieu, my lord! when we meet again, it will be for our mutual advantage that our perceptions should be somewhat clearer!"

She retired with majesty. Lord Montague looked at her with mingled admiration and anger: "It is plain she never loved me!" he sighed, and departed.

CHAP. XI.

'Tis slander,
Whose edge is sharper than the sword: whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world; kings, queens, and states,
Maids, matrons, nay the secrets of the grave,
This viperous slander enters. SHAKSPEARE.

LORD Montague still retained the letter that had separated him from Isadora. He examined it repeatedly; every examination strengthened the suspicions the first perusal of it had excited, and on those suspicions he resolved to act.

Lady Jane Lorn was, he found on enquiry, at —— in —— shire. On examining the post-mark, he discovered it to be that of a town some fifteen miles distant from ——, and evidently dispatched from thence to elude suspicion.

Lord Montague had seen the writing of Lady Jane only in those cyphers which he had obtained from the Countess du Chateau-vieux; one of these cyphers particularly resembled the letter *g*, and from the habit of making the cypher, Lady Jane had given the same peculiar curve to the *g*; this was a letter continually recurring, and it was remarkable, that not once did it want this distinguishing curve.

What trifles lead to detection! the form of one letter, convicted a woman allied to some of the first families in Great Britain, of the grossest imposture and most infamous contrivances!

Lord Montague enquired out the lodgings of Lady Jane, and was directed thence to the County Hall. It was exceedingly crowded, and every one appeared conversing on a subject that completely engrossed him. Lord Montague pushed his way through the crowd; but, once within the inner court, he found egress impossible, and was compelled to wait in

silence the termination of a tedious process relative to a bankruptcy.

That suit closed, the counsel for the succeeding one having taken their places, the clerk of the assizes signified, in all the pomposity of law technicals that which reduced to plain English was simply, "an action brought against Sir Thomas Clervaux, Baronet, by Lady Jane Lorn, for a breach of promise of marriage."

The attention of the court was instantly arrested; even the females sat in profound silence; and the counsel for the plaintiff addressed the jury.

He began with remarking, that "of all the aggravated cases, in which he had had the honour to be employed, the one now submitted to the cognizance of a jury of Englishmen, was the most flagitious. The defendant was a Baronet;— for the honour of rank, of that education and that society which were the natural attendants on rank, he was grieved that so base an action should have been committed by one of its members, but it was

incumbent on him to state facts, and *only* facts, and this point he was obliged to bring before the jury. Sir Thomas Clervaux was of an ancient family in the county of ——, a family well known to most who formed that jury, many of whom could bear testimony to the worth of it, could prove its unstained honour and spotless integrity, and would therefore the more deeply regret with him, this foul defection of its present representative. His client, Lady Jane Lorn, was of a family too well known for him to expatiate on their talents, their abilities, and their honour. The Duke of —— and Lord Percival Lorn were the brothers of the plaintiff, each remarkable for their incorruptible integrity, in those two great houses which are the bulwarks of the liberties of the people: the latter no less distinguished as the ablest orator that had graced the lower house for years, than for his independence, and support of the rights of the subject. These noblemen, who dignified their high descent

by individual worth, had admitted the defendant to their friendship; no trifling proof that his talents were above mediocrity;—and for what does he employ these talents?" continued the counsel, with animation: "Gentlemen, to steal the affections of the sister of his friends—of the men, whose countenance gave him a degree of credit with the world, which, it is probable, he would not otherwise have enjoyed. Yes! he besieges the heart of an accomplished woman, by a display of those qualities which are so fatally attractive to the female sex. He calls every allurement to his aid;—the tenderest attentions, the warmest display of animated affection, are engines brought to subvert a citadel defended by talents, virtue, and the most brilliant endowments! Lady Jane soon returned what she *believed* to be affection, by as pure, and as bright a flame as ever glowed in the breast of woman. He extorted from her a confession of partiality; their engagement was formed: she anticipated

the society of an accomplished companion; the sympathy of a tender friend; the possession of those thousand endearing ties, which are united in the name of husband. Buoyed up in a pleasing security, — confiding in the honour of the man her heart had selected, she forgot to contemplate the possibility of a reverse; and, whilst gazing on the cloudless sky that canopied her head, the earthquake burst beneath her feet; defenceless, and unprepared to meet it, for a time, she sunk beneath the shock. Yes! this perjured lover had gained a triumph over that heart, for which so many had striven in vain. Conscious of his power, the idea of it inflated him. With wanton cruelty, he chose the moment of perfect confidence to dash the phantom of happiness from her embrace; she exerts herself to regain it in vain: the beautiful vision flies from her extended arms; they close on the tortured heart that desertion has writhed! Oh, Gentlemen of the Jury — ye fathers, ye brothers, ye husbands, con-

template the misery one of that sex, which is united to you by the tenderest ties, endures! Behold her extended on a couch of anguish, heart-broken, and despairing! She calls to you for vengeance! She beseeches you to punish this man, who has wrecked her earthly happiness. She says to you—'fathers, brothers, husbands, contemplate the situation to which I am reduced: as you value the peace of those beings so dear to you, signify your abhorrence of the crime by which I suffer, in the judgment you shall this day give.—In avenging me, ward off from those you love the blow that may crush them.'—Gentlemen, I leave my cause in your hands, confident, as you are men and fathers, what will be your decision. At present, we shall bring before you evidence to validate the fact which must determine your verdict. That once proved, I calculate with confidence on the result."

The witnesses for the plaintiff having been examined, the counsel for the defendant arose, and thus addressed the Court: —

"Gentlemen of the Jury,

"After the very pathetic and eloquent speech with which you have been favoured by the learned gentleman on behalf of the plaintiff, I feel that I have little chance of a verdict in favour of my client, if eloquence is to be the rule of your judgment. *There* I acknowledge the superiority of my learned friend; — *there* he is unrivalled; and if the aggravated cases in which, as he expresses it, he has had the honour to be employed, are generally of the same hue as that on which I now address you, I am sure it is not a talent that he can afford to conceal 'under a bushel.' — I know, Gentlemen, and *you* are not to be told, that a *doubtful* cause *requires* eloquence: yes, all the oratorical abilities, and flowers of rhetoric, with which my learned friend so well understands the art of

seasoning his addresses to his countrymen, are necessary to give it an appearance of plausibility. 'Fiction needs embellishment; truth is powerful enough without it. Ornament may suffice to draw your attention from the *matter* to the *manner;* and in admiring the one, you may suffer your better judgment to slumber in regard to the other. I would rouse this slumbering faculty: — I would strip the facts of those meretricious ornaments with which the talents of my learned friend have decked them: — I would expose them naked to your view; and if I can succeed in quieting the powerful agitation he has produced in your minds, I do not despair of proving the superiority of unadorned truth, to fiction and sophistry, clad in that most splendid garb, which the prolific genius of the learned gentleman has thought necessary to throw over them.

" I agree with my learned friend, that a base action committed by a person high in rank, is doubly criminal, and doubly

dangerous; — doubly criminal, because he is, as you have just heard, supposed to sin, not from want of knowledge, because his situation has secured to him such a portion as is not general to persons of a lower class: — doubly dangerous, for I am sure I need not expatiate on the wide-spreading evil which results from elevated examples of depravity. So far, the sentiments of the gentleman who has addressed you and my own exactly coincide. I apprehend we shall not agree in our estimation on whom this charge of turpitude ought to be fixed.

"My learned friend has thought proper to fix your attention on the popular principles of the Lorn family: — now, gentlemen, it appears to me that political conduct has not the most remote bearing on the point under present discussion: if he calculates on the effect to be produced on your minds by these insinuations as influencing your verdict, I must observe to you, gentlemen, that he equally insults your understandings and your

principles. You are not to be *blinded* by party feeling; you are not to be *led* by party feeling; you will not give a verdict against your consciences under the *dominion* of party feeling. Gentlemen, I am sure you will not: and in this conviction I lay the subsequent facts before you.

"It is true that my client was admitted to the intimacy of his Grace the Duke of ——, and his brother Lord Percival Lorn; it was an intimacy very different from what the learned gentleman would insinuate: at the time of its commencement, my client was the happy husband of a young and lovely wife. *There* was the foundation of the friendship — terrible perversion of the term! — between Sir Thomas Clervaux and the Lorn family. The beauty of Lady Clervaux attracted the libertine gaze of Lord Percival; his visits became frequent; and to give them a more satisfactory appearance, he introduced Sir Thomas Clervaux to his Grace, the Duke of ——, and the

plaintiff Lady Jane. It was necessary to the justification of my client that these particulars should be laid before you: I am not going to enter into further detail; I would merely communicate the result. Lord Percival succeeded in seducing the affections of the beautiful wife of his *friend*, from her husband: — she eloped with him: — my client sued for and obtained a divorce, and it was in this character that Lady Jane drew from him — yes, I will say, *drew from him* — that promise on which the present trial rests.

"And this was the friendship to which the gentleman on the other side directed your attention: — *this* was the friendship which he would have you believe reflected only honour on my client? Gentlemen, suffer me to put this question to the heart of each of you — could the distinction compensate the injury, — could the honour compensate the subsequent disgrace?

"This divorced husband — this man grieving for the loss of a wife, for whom

his love was yet in the first stage of passion, for they had been married a very short time — was selected by the plaintiff as a *good speculation.* Allow me, gentlemen, to explain to you, as clearly as I can, the precise meaning of that phrase. Lady Jane Lorn is a woman of a high family, and also a woman of the world; with such an one, rank, establishment, income, are first-rate objects in marriage: she calculates with admirable nicety on the advantages which distinguish her various suitors, and selects him in whose favour this calculation results. Matrimony with her, is a speculation of distinction, and wealth; and Sir Thomas Clervaux was, therefore, a *good* speculation. Having once discovered this, the lady became the soother of his distress, and the adviser of all his measures; and in a moment of gratitude on his part, and of triumph on her's, she succeeded in obtaining that promise, which it has been proved to you she *did* obtain from him.

"As soon as this was acknowledged, the friends of my client remonstrated in a manner equally strong and just on the folly and impropriety of the step he meditated. It was unnatural and horrible, said they, that he should give that place to the sister of his wife's seducer, which would yet have been occupied but for the arts of that man. Their remonstrances had effect: — I am not going, for an instant, to assert any thing derogatory to the *virtue* of the plaintiff, Lady Jane Lorn; but I do affirm, that when once a man recovered his powers of reflection from the influence of female fascination, he would hesitate to trust his honour to the keeping of one of that family, a member of which had already so disgraced him!

"I have said that I am not going to insinuate any thing derogatory to the virtue of the lady; but I *am* going to charge her with a gross violation of the first of female attributes, the best guardian of virtue, — I mean *delicacy*. Yes;

at the time the plaintiff was receiving the addresses of Sir Thomas Clervaux, she was endeavouring to regain the affections of a gentleman over whom she once had powerful influence. This gentleman was Henry Wharton Grosvenor, Esquire, and a member of parliament, a man of unblemished integrity, and whose name will recall to your minds the parliamentary orator whom the world admires. I shall presently bring before you the evidence of this gentleman, which will substantiate my assertions.

"This will prove to you, gentlemen of the jury, that Lady Jane Lorn did, in fact, consider Sir Thomas Clervaux a *good speculation*; but it also demonstrates that she estimated Mr. Grosvenor more highly: and preferring, as it appears she did do, this gentleman, what possible motive can influence her in bringing this action?—*Pecuniary* compensation only; and compensation for what?—Gentlemen, the lady must be obliged to *you* for the discovery; I con-

fess it is past my finding out, and I dare defy *herself* even to prove any.

"A strong appeal has been made to your feelings by placing the lady before you, arrayed in sackcloth and ashes, stretched on a bed of sorrow, and bowed by the pressure of affliction! This is a melancholy picture, but to interest us, it wants the advantage of *reality*. We know it is ideal; and though we admire the powerful imagination of the gentleman who sketched it, we do not discover the harmony of truth!

"We hear not a word of the lady's age; I admire the prudent silence of my learned friend; but for my own part, I am inclined to be communicative on this point: the fact is, the lady is five years the senior of my client; she is now five-and-thirty; an age when the thoughtlessnesses of youth are corrected by experience, when we reasonably expect circumspection and prudence. The day of romance is past at this time of life; reality usurps the place of fiction; poetry

yields to the common-places of existence: we no longer calculate on the magnificence of Aladdin's palace; we learn to appreciate the comforts of the substantial houses which shelter us.

"You admire the eloquence of my learned friend! — it *is* admirable, but it is not wonderful, for he has a powerful motive. — Gentlemen, this heart-broken victim to the deceits of our sex, this weeping martyr to affection, will reward his eloquence by the hand which Sir Thomas Clervaux rejected! You start, gentlemen: surprise appears in your countenances; I see the indignation with which you receive this information; I shall call witnesses to prove it to you; — your verdict will give a bride to the arms of my learned friend; the damages you award, will be the dower that is to recompense him!"

The counsel proceeded to the examination of witnesses; the facts were proved; the judge summed up the evidence; the fact of the engagement being

allowed, and that being the ground on which the present action was brought against the defendant, a verdict was given for the plaintiff, — damages forty shillings?

Lord Montague escaped from the court; this curious trial having concluded, and returned to the lodgings of Lady Jane. Her ladyship had just arrived from the court, where she had heard the whole of her trial, *incognita.*

Lord Montague did not suffer himself to be announced: he burst on the presence of Lady Jane, equally unwelcome and unexpected.

"May I enquire to what powerful motive I am indebted for the honour of this visit?" demanded Lady Jane, with as much *hauteur* as she could possibly assume.

"Your ladyship is right in calling it a *powerful* motive; that motive *must* be powerful which brings me to the lodgings of Lady Jane Lorn!" replied Lord Montague, with equal haughtiness.

"Your lordship will be pleased to explain it: I am engaged, and desire not to be intruded on."

"I *feel* it to be an intrusion, madam: imperative necessity demanded it, and I will say that Lady Jane Lorn herself brought me here."

"Lady Jane Lorn did herself a very unintentional honour, I beg permission to assure you, my lord: you will be pleased to explain."

"I once had the satisfaction of seeing some cyphers of Lady Jane Lorn's penmanship."

"And having seen them, you were ungenerous and unmanly enough to take advantage of the impertinent folly of a talkative Frenchwoman, to employ them to the destruction of persons who, having had no intercourse with you, could not possibly injure you."

"They injured me in the fact of injuring my country. Every weapon directed against the welfare of my native land attacks *me* individually, and every worthy citizen of it."

"And you do not disdain to employ the most dishonourable means to blunt that weapon! I did not imagine that the Earl of Montague would so have condescended."

"Madam, this is childish. I must remind your ladyship that I am here, in the apartment of Lady Jane, only on the most important business."

"Proceed to it, then, if you please, my lord: I have a desire to hear it immediately."

"Those cyphers to which I just now alluded were too remarkable to be ever forgotten: there is one more particularly which I could not forget; it resembles the letter *g*, and was constantly used to denote his Grace the Duke of ——."

"Proceed, my lord," said Lady Jane, impatiently: "I need not to be reminded of that."

"It was necessary that you should clearly recollect it, to understand the nature of my present business. Lady Jane Lorn is unable to discontinue the

use of this dangerous cypher in ordinary writing; and this particular *g* is constantly recurring."

"If your lordship would condescend to be intelligible, I should have greater pleasure in listening to you," said Lady Jane, in a subdued voice.

"Your ladyship should be particularly cautious in the use of these cyphers; they may lead to detection where, I am sure, you would wish to escape it, if you have half that prudence and that knowledge of the world for which I give you credit."

"Please to be a little more explicit, my lord," said Lady Jane, unsuccessfully endeavouring at haughty composure.

"In plain terms, that letter with which your ladyship favoured Miss Argyle is, at this moment, in my possession."

Lady Jane turned pale, and caught at the back of her chair to prevent herself from falling.

"I gave your ladyship credit," said Lord Montague, "for a vast share of ability in the designing of your projects,

and of perseverance in the execution of them. This letter," drawing it from his pocket, "is a master-piece of eloquence, but in some parts liable to censure in that point in which many authors fail; one assertion contradicts a former one, or one deduction disproves another. Your ladyship should be aware that such contradictions always render one suspicious of *fable*, and one cannot suffer one's self to be interested in that which one feels to be fictitious. The beauty of any fiction is the resemblance it bears to truth, and the power it possesses of leading the reader or the hearer from any idea of its falsity to the persuasion that it has occurred in real life."

"Insulting barbarian!" exclaimed Lady Jane: — "how *dare* you thus outrage me, how *dare* you assert that I am the writer of that letter?"

"Your ladyship surely will not disavow so able a production of your pen: you will not suffer another to appropriate these flowers culled from the parterre of

tropes and figures, these finely turned periods, these pathetic ideas which are constantly recurring!"

"What *proof* have you, my lord, that *I* am the writer of this imputed letter?" demanded Lady Jane, *compelling* into her service an appearance of calmness.

"Will your ladyship undertake to prove that it is *not* your writing?" demanded Lord Montague, fixing on her that glance which scarcely any mortal could withstand.

Lady Jane shrunk under it; she paled, trembled convulsive, and was again obliged to grasp her chair.

"Lady Jane," said Lord Montague, in a voice of earnest solemnity, "it is in vain for you to deny it; if I had not previously been ascertained of the fact, this confusion would convince me.—Denial or subterfuge is in vain. Here is a pen: write on the back of this letter, '*Lady Jane Lorn to Miss Argyle*;' this will be sufficient for my purpose, and I promise you, that here the affair shall rest."

Lady Jane mechanically obeyed; she traced the sentence he had dictated.

"This will not do, Lady Jane!" he said, as he glanced over the sentence, and saw a proof of her wonderful powers of penmanship:—"I must have exactly the same hand-writing as characterizes the letter."

Lady Jane looked at him with passionate indignation; she took the pen in silence, and obeyed him.

"That will do, madam: it will save *me* the trouble of another visit to your ladyship, and *yourself* the pain of receiving one from me."

"Man, abhorred, detested, and always dreaded!" exclaimed Lady Jane, secure from farther exposure by the promise of Lord Montague, and wrought to the highest pitch of passion:—"I repent of no part of that occurrence but detection! I regret only its ill success! foolish, fond woman, that Miss Argyle! Are you not grateful for such proof of excessive affection? Go, and detail to her another

specimen of the witchcraft that is in you, of the potency of the fascination you carry about with you! Go, and the curse of our fallen house sit heavy on you!"

Lord Montague contemplated her in pity, and left her to the workings of her evil passions, and to the soothings of the lover who had so ably pleaded for her.

CHAP. XII.

Si quis enim, nec zelotypus irascitur, nec pugnat aliquando amator, nec perjurat, non est habendus amator. LUCIAN.

Not though thy form breathes each attractive grace,
And love sits throned in triumph on thy face;
'Tis that thy soul each finer impulse given
Bears stamped in fire the signature of heaven!

To Miss Argyle.

"I INCLOSE you, madam, the letter which you confided to me; you will see by the lines traced on the outside, to whom you were indebted for it. My own honour demanded the detection of the imposture; that satisfied, what remains?—What ought *I* to say to Miss Argyle—what ought she to hear from me?

"Alas, madam! Isadora, of what have you suspected me?—of crimes, from the very contemplation of which your shuddering soul must shrink?—of seduction,

desertion, baseness, hardness of heart; and a catalogue of misdeeds so black, that the eye turns with horror from them.

"Is *this* the reward of a love so intense, so constant?—a love that withstood indifference — time — a love, that never for an instant ceased to glow in my breast!—a love, whose first, last, only, dearest object, was always Isadora!

"Dearest of women, why have you driven me from you?—why have you suspected me of crimes to which my soul could never condescend? What plausible lie could calumny invent, that would for a moment have found entrance into *my* heart? I should have smiled at the vain attempt to stagger my faith in you! I should have laughed to scorn the efforts of the enemies of us both! But *you*, Isadora, *you* admitted the first ridiculous accusation that appeared against me; you suffered the darts of an anonymous assassin to separate us? You—but why should I thus enu-

merate? — what right had I to calculate on a love which was scarcely avowed — the existence of which I scarcely dared to suspect?

"Deprived, Isadora, of those parents whose wisdom might have counselled me, and whose affection would have formed for me a tie with humanity, which till lately I never knew, I was early thrown on the great theatre of the world, with a pulse throbbing with animation at anticipated delights — a heart bounding with exultation as it contemplated the alluring variety displayed before it — and a capacity for love, for passion, which formed a part of my very nature.

"Young, high in rank and in fortune, my name stamping my character with worth and greatness, I found an admission into every circle, and early cultivated that propensity to observe, which the travel of after years gratified.

"Although, as I have told you, passion was interwoven with my very na-

ture, it seldom appeared to the eye of the superficial observer: it lay 'deep within,' often unsuspected, and never called into action; but inaction strengthened its energies; I reserved the whole force of it for the being whom, of all the world, I should select for my companion, my adviser, my consoler; I repressed its exertion, because I saw that in most situations enthusiasm drew on its possessor only ridicule; but I never, for an instant, endeavoured to reduce its actual influence on me, conscious that although it might increase my susceptibility of pain, it would enlarge my capacities for those sublime pleasures, which elevate and refine the nature of man into something more nearly approaching to divinity.

"Many objects, many of the loveliest females on whom the sun has shone, affected my imagination for a transient hour; but never beyond it; and I sought in vain for the reality of that image my heart had enshrined in its

most secret recess! I sought in vain for the being to whom I could say, 'Welcome thou to my heart, — and rule there for ever!'

"For years I travelled, and saw man in all his infinite variety of aspects. A constant recurrence of those objects I had before contemplated, induced languor and disgust. I saw, without deriving amusement: I travelled, and longed for home: I returned to that home, and found no friends to welcome or to bless me: I stood alone in the world, separated from the great link of society, an unfit mate for the triflers of mankind, and thrown continually in the sphere of triflers alone.

"*Now* I recurred to *love*, as to the goal where all my hopes, all my wishes, all my fears were to terminate, and give place to a blissful reality. I employed myself continually in combining an image which possessed all those qualities that must attract me: I contemplated this beautiful vision of my fond dreams with

admiration and delight; I thought I saw the being who was to be the whole world to me, and I was confident that only such an one could ever have interest in me!

"Judge then what I must have felt, when, like Pygmalion, I saw my idol in existence!

"On your character I began to speculate as on those of the beings by whom you were surrounded; by combination and comparison I understood the high tone of mind that distinguished you from them — that elevated you so high above them. I recurred incessantly to the contemplation of you; present, I saw only you; absent, my mind admitted no other idea. You possessed most of those qualities which distinguished the ideal being my heart had set up; and you had also an originality of manner which delighted me beyond expression: it was continually changing, but always graceful; and though thus versatile in appearance, no one, for an instant, suspected that your heart was affected by this

agreeable fickleness, for your conduct was always nobly consistent!

"Isadora, I loved you! the rest you know!

"And what a reward have you bestowed on me in recompence for that love!— you have suspected me of dishonour; you have cast a stain on that which no other ever dared to impugn! and this without allowing me to justify myself before you condemned! You have preferred the accusations of an obscure, of a concealed individual, to the weight of actions and experience! You have sunk yourself in my opinion, Isadora! you have humbled *me* in my own.

"Perhaps you will acknowledge the arrival of Lady Jane Lorn's packet. Mr. Grosvenor charges me with his most affectionate wishes.

"I have the honour to be,

"Your most devoted,

"MONTAGUE."

To Miss Argyle.

"Ten days have elapsed, madam, and I have not had the honour of receiving any answer to the letter I addressed to you. *That* letter inclosed a packet from Lady Jane Lorn, which it is of importance should have arrived safe. I beg of you to satisfy me on this point.

"Ungrateful, proud Isadora! must I despair of ever touching that impenetrable heart? must I be continually convinced of your incapacity to love; must I constantly be reminded that *I* am not the happy object?

"Alas! am I not already perfectly convinced of it? am I not aware that you were eager to suspect and condemn me? what other more powerful proof can you yet give!

"Proud woman! I defy you to wound more deeply than you have done! I challenge you to discover a more exquisite means of torture! You cannot produce a proof of more complete triumph;

You tell me *feelingly*, not only that you do not *love* me, but that I am absolutely indifferent to you! You are silent, and you exult in the misery which you imagine that silence inflicts! — But no, madam! I do not complain; I submit without murmur to your arrangements: you have severed the link of friendship that was between us! you *suspected* me, when most you ought to have confided in me! and you chose the moment when unbounded love was pouring itself into your bosom, for the indulgence of those suspicions, for the expression of them!

"But I thank you, madam: you have kindly released your captive from his chains! he is once more at liberty, and roving with unfettered wing in other scenes, and amidst other pursuits.

"I am, Madam, &c. &c.

"MONTAGUE."

To Miss Argyle.

" '*You have received Lady Jane's packet*!' and was this one line all the answer you deigned to write to my letters? I have *not* deserved this, Isadora! I feel that I have not!

" And do you drive *me*, who am justly offended and angry with you, to address you continually as if I were the criminal, and you the innocent abused person! — Allow me to assure you that I feel the crime you have committed against me and love, to be, at once, enormous and unpardonable.

" Perhaps you imagine that I shall interpret your answers too favourably! Permit me, madam, to remove that fear! I aim only at the *friendship* of Miss Argyle: all thoughts of inspiring a warmer sentiment are for ever abandoned by me!' "

" Thus you see, madam, you have needlessly alarmed yourself: you have

foreseen effects, sufficiently annoying to yourself doubtless, which *can* never arise. Do not, therefore, persist in silence by imaginary fears. Condescend to consider me only in the light in which I am desirous of appearing. Nothing can be more ridiculous than to act under false impressions. You are no longer *yourself*, when you are thus perversely obstinate. I entreat you to resume your natural character, and to discard the distorted mask, which at once conceals and disfigures you.

"After all, I still feel myself the injured person; and I trust to your generosity to acknowledge, that it is not without reason that I am displeased and deeply wounded.

"I am, Madam, &c. &c.

"MONTAGUE."

To Miss Argyle.

"Obstinate silence! — unaccountable perverseness! I did imagine, that my last would have extorted an answer from you! This is a firmness for which I never gave you credit; a firmness, permit me to observe, of the most unfeminine and unbecoming kind; a firmness, of which *the friend* of Miss Argyle is sorry to find her capable! — Alas, Isadora! how different are you from what you were wont to be!

"Where is that dignified mind, where that elevation of thought, that propriety of action, which was used to distinguish you? — Are you content to obscure all those graces, so attractive in you, by this assumed characteristic? — Oh, Isadora! it cannot be *natural* in you to be unamiable, unyielding, and ungracious! — it cannot be *natural* in you to rive the heart you have already wounded!

"But I go — I leave England. *You* no longer acknowledge an interest in my

remaining. Of what consequence is it to me *where* I roam, or what land receives me?—Is there a heart more closely shut against me on those opposite shores, from which the ocean separates us, than that which heaves so slowly in *thy* breast, Isadora!—It cannot be;—what matters it then, whether land or sea separates us, so that we are still divided!

"You will exclaim on the inutility of my laying my plans before you. I acknowledge that it is obtrusive; I own, that I ought not to claim a friendship you refuse to allow me; but the time of my remaining in the country which you inhabit, the uncertainty of my ever returning, must plead for me.

"Farewell, Isadora!

"MONTAGUE."

To Miss Argyle.

"You will not even bid me farewell!—you refuse to give me that one little

pledge of amity, even now that I am on the very brink of quitting England for ever! — And are cruelty and hardness of heart the characteristics of Isadora? — Is this perverse — this inflexible — the being on whom my soul doated? — From what a dream of perfection have you roused me!

"Adieu! too dear, too beloved! adieu!

"MONTAGUE."

To Miss Argyle.

"Still silent, Isadora! — still cold and haughty! — still relentless and unforgiving! — Ah, madam! how eager I am to complain, — how justifiable complaint appears to me! — I may sink into the tomb, Isadora, and *who* will weep for me? — I may repose in the sepulchre of my fathers, and what affectionate eye will seek out *my* urn, to weep over the ashes it enshrines?

"*I* may die, and all record of me will vanish! — *I* may live my little hour, —

and for what purpose?— to add the thirtieth earl to the line of Montague. Surely this is sufficient to gratify the ambition of man! — The *thirtieth* of a race, all the chiefs of which were princes in the land!— Enviable, proud distinction! — This is, indeed, to quaff honour and renown from the splendidly gilt cup, carved from the skull of the dead!

"What is this world, madam, that we are so anxious to prolong our existence in it? — He who saw its wealth, its honours, its amusements, its follies, its learning, and its wisdom, affirms that it is all 'vanity of vanities!' — 'There is no remembrance of the wise man more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? — as the fool!'

"But the talisman of Orosmades is yet to be found; potent enough to transform the whole earth into a blooming Eden! — Happy they, who secure that talisman, though but for a moment!

— Their's is the longest life; because they have not lived in vain — they have tasted happiness!

"And I too, Isadora, have dreamt that I might boast this rich possession; but you have undeceived me, and I thank you! — Yes: I flee from those scenes which might recall to me those blissful visions, that have so long delighted me. I caught a glimpse, like Colabah, into the gardens of Irêm, and then lost sight of it for ever.

"We are to separate, and our separation is to be eternal! — I am to feel, that

There is a pang that rends the inmost heart,
A hidden grief, that tears but ill express,
When they who long have loved, at length must part,
And tread alone life's wilderness!
When that fond converse, that was wont to bless
Each happier hour, is then for ever fled;
That voice, which shared each joy, or soothed distress,
In foreign lands, or numbered with the dead.
While memory pictures every bliss that's flown,
And fondly lingers o'er each pleasing scene;

Recals to each the joys that each has known,
Then wakes the slumberer from his blissful dream!
Then paints those clay-cold hours, that shake the brave,
The silent, dark unknown, — the future, and the grave!

"Farewell, Isadora! farewell! — I leave England — perhaps for ever! — God bless you! — I forgive, from my very heart, the sufferings you have caused to me!

"Isadora! my weakness yet fondly lingers. I hesitate, I sicken, as the gloomy knell of expiring happiness vibrates on my ear! But you will have it so, and we part!

"Farewell!

"MONTAGUE."

"Leave me to myself — I am dying," said a celebrated character, in his last moments.

"Alas!" sighed Lord Montague, as he closed the volume of the philosopher's

life, "whenever my last hour shall arise, such an injunction will be unnecessary. No friendly arm supports me in the hour of sickness, and the bed of death is not likely to attract one. 'Tis strange," said he, folding his arms, and pacing the apartment, " 'tis strange, that while the blooming charities of life flourish in such proud luxuriance around me, that I alone, like the fabled Tantalus, should be unable to partake them — that I should be barred from their enjoyment by a spell invincible, as that flaming barrier, that kept, of old, the paradise of Eden; — that I should be destined, like the offspring of its banished tenants, to wander through the world alone.

" Am I not formed, like others, to bask in the sunshine of affection? Do I not feel its privation as keenly? Does not *my* heart glow with enthusiastic ardour to find an object for its love? and shall its energies be lost from inactivity; become palsied by being dormant; or perish by the freezing chill of disappoint-

ment? Shall the ardent fire of my affections, like a sepulchral lamp, illumine only the bosom that enshrines it? Shall it not rather, like the flame in the bosom of the enamoured Babylonian, burn with intenser fury from concealment?

"When then shall it repose?

"Shall I, who feel, from sad experience, that the brilliant prospects of the world are but the visions of enchantment, again prove the falsehood of its promise? seek again its imaginary enjoyments, as the child pursues the rainbow, or flatter myself, like the deluded Agag, 'that its bitterness is past?'

"Shall I seek for congenial feelings among the gay and the inexperienced that encircle me? — lean with unsuspecting fondness on some sordid associate, — enwreath love's flowery fetters round my soul, and entrust my happiness to the fickle security of *woman's* caprice, that varies like the breeze of heaven? Alas, no! The sickness of my heart, though engendered by the desart, must not, like

the prophet's flock, raise a *serpent* for its cure!

"If I cannot, like Brutus, enjoy the devotion of a Portia, or solace myself, like Scipio, with the friendship of a Lælius, I will stand alone!

"But, methinks, there is a glorious equivalent for all that I shall lose.

"Even now, the expanse of ocean, reflecting the omnipotence of its Almighty Author, seems to invite me to its bosom. Art and nature combine to unfold the vast arcana of their treasure. Health and fortune wait but to conduct me through each variety of place and clime, and to display, in unwearied succession, every scene in this drama of existence. They present *man* infinitely diversified by customs, manners, and laws, in every age and nation; shining on the surface of society, or shrouded in the desart; harnessed for the hour of danger, or enjoying, in the bower of peace, the glorious vintage of his toil. The discoveries of science, the splendid operations

of nature, the rise and fall of empires, are so many pages in the mighty volume provided for our present speculation; whilst religion smiles at their fading glory, and unfolds the sacred record of eternity.

" Shall I not then seize the proffered bounty of Heaven? Shall I linger with irresolute delay, and refuse to expatiate on such a scene when it is offered by the Almighty? Shall I range through the wonders of his world, when himself has opened the portal; or shall I feebly anchor my feverish hopes on some minor object, and imprison my contracted view to an insular corner of his creation?"

The progress of his reflections was, at this moment, interrupted by the arrival of the following letter.

To the Earl of Montague.

" You are going to France!—indeed! I wish I understood what planet regulates

your movements! Madame de Pologne is doubtless brilliant and beautiful as formerly — are you inclined to range yourself under her banners? You will have a multitude of rivals, I fear; but you calculate on the glory of victory: — certainly, when the arm of one knight routs an army, we cannot refuse him the meed of praise; and fame is inseparable from such an exploit. Go forth then, my lord, 'conquering and to conquer:' and let the '*Io*' of victory mingle with the rapturous swell of the epithalamium!

"Admire how readily I accommodate myself to the style you choose to adopt. I return you *badinage pour le badinage!* I do not dare to indulge a hope of excelling: your lordship is an adept, — I but a novice; yet with your instructions and your example, I do not despair of acquiring so great a proficiency, that I may, in time, become chief lecturer to the *Académie de la Méchanceté.*

"Forgive me, Algernon; — do you not remember when first you taught me

to address you by that name—I avow it,—by that *beloved* name? It was on the eve of your departure for Waterloo:—how much bliss was mingled with the agony of that evening! I cannot reflect on it with calmness;—I knew then, for the first time, what it was to be loved by him who had long been the only object for whom I wished to live! And what a moment for discovery!—when you were about to mingle in the throng of battle, and to court the death so easily found there! When I reflect on this period, I seem to have drunk of the Zemzem waters, and to remember every trifling circumstance connected with it, with the facility and accuracy of Abd' allah al Hâfedh.

"Think you that I would soften your displeasure by awakening these recollections?—oh, no! I *would* not soften you;—neither would I but have received your letters, though I might have avoided all the uneasiness their contents have occasioned to me.

"I admire the phantom you have raised to terrify me into humility! 'You are on the very brink of quitting England —perhaps for ever!' If you have really imagined that you had the *power* of quitting it, you have completely deceived yourself. Do you not remember, that when the Neapolitan prince raised his sword against Prosper, the magician, by his powerful act, deprived him of all power of action! Oh, my lord, have you not *yet* proved that you are scarcely less completely spell-bound? Stay, I *command* you: you *dare* not disobey—for your life, you dare not!

> You are, my lord, as Daphne was,
> Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

"Your first letter—what shall I say of your first letter, Algernon? Shall I tell you, that from the moment of my receiving it, it has been my constant companion, and that worlds should not be the purchase of it? Too conscious of your own power, you are perfectly aware of this already; or you would not

have hazarded the unpalatable truth, that "I have sunk myself in your opinion!'—You, perhaps, compelled yourself to *fancy* this, but, on my honour, you never *felt* it; —you knew that I am too fine a vessel to be sunk by the paltry cannonade of an anonymous letter, or by the petulance of a self-tormentor!

"Oh, what a triumph was your second letter to me!—You 'defied me to wound more deeply than I had done!'—you 'challenged me to discover a more exquisite means of torture!' I did not hesitate to accept the challenge: —you, you Algernon, furnished me with weapons; I had only to prolong my silence; —I was certain that your resentment would never be sufficiently powerful to permit your repaying the offence in kind! The event proved the accuracy of my calculations;—you wrote again;—suffer me to pursue my triumph;—you had the audacity to assure me that my offence was unpardonable! You wrote again and again to *prove* this to me;—what a confirmation!

"Did 'my dignified mind, my elevation of thought, my propriety of action,' no longer exist when I tormented you by my silence? Alas, my good lord, when you embarked your happiness in the light, wanton, vessel of a woman's caprice, you did not calculate that fancy might lead her to displace her loyal ensign, and hoist false colours.

"Have I not displayed sufficiently that I still possess all the *méchanceté* of which you were used to accuse me? I am *not* changed; — you may again sink into slumber, dear Montague, may again be enraptured by your 'dream of perfection;' it is not for my interest that you should ever completely awake from it.

"Adieu, Algernon: when may I expect you? We have each played our parts in this drama of your own composition with great *éclat*; if we procrastinate longer, I fear our *denouement* will be trite and uninteresting.

"Isadora Argyle."

To Miss Argyle.

"Dearest, dearest Isadora, I fly to you! What a fortnight has this last been! separated from you, how cheerless an aspect has every thing worn! But it has been of service to me, I have searched into my own heart, and I have proved how perfectly that doating heart acquits you.

"You were right; you have not erred! *If* you loved me, you could not be indifferent to the suggestions of a letter *so* written, *so* artfully contrived to engage your compassion for its supposed writer! You *were* offended;—suffer me to enjoy the bliss of the implication.

"Dear, lovely tyrant, use your graceful *méchanceté* as you please; I cannot but admire and applaud it. Did I, indeed, write that you had sunk yourself in my opinion? erase the hateful line, and forget that my madness ever penned it!

"Enjoy your triumph; *your* victory is *my* pride, suffer *me* likewise to triumph in your pardon.

"When are you to expect me? Did

you think, my haughty Isadora, that I should allow you leisure to collect all the coldness and pride you can so well assume? I am not a Catholic; and I do not suppose that my Heaven is to be purchased by voluntary sufferings and torments. You receive this from my courier; you read it with — may I say, with pleasure? In an instant I am at your feet: do not refuse me the welcome I anticipate.

"MONTAGUE."

CHAP. XIII.

There her hopes
Rest at the fated goal. For from the birth
Of mortal man, the sov'reign Maker said,
That not in humble or in brief delight,
Not in the fading echoes of renown,
Power's purple robes, or pleasure's flow'ry lap,
The soul should find enjoyment.

AKENSIDE.

" MARRIED: — on Wednesday last, at " Harwell Castle, by the Right Reverend " the Lord Bishop of C——, the Right " Honourable Algernon Fitzroy, Earl of " Montague, Viscount Arlingham, Ba- " ron Montague, Knight of the most " noble order of the Garter, &c. &c. &c., " to Isadora, only daughter of the late " Clement Argyle, Esq. of Harwell " Castle in Devonshire; and of Avon " park in the county of Cumberland. " Immediately after the ceremony, the " noble pair proceeded to Montague

"Castle in Surrey, where it is supposed "they will remain till after Christmas."

The morning of that day had dawned gloriously; not a cloud flitted over the pure azure of the heavens, or obstructed the beams of a clear, brilliant winter's sun. Lord Montague received from the hands of Mr. Walworth, the best reward of learning, distinction, and unsullied honour. If the rapture of the moment was susceptible of the slightest diminution, it was occasioned by that tender regret naturally induced in their minds by the remembrance of the friend whose voice would doubly have consecrated their union. It was a high satisfaction, however, to reflect, that in prophetic anticipation of this moment, he had prayed for that happiness he had not lived to witness.

But the nuptial benison was pronounced; the voice of the distinguished Bishop of C—— had consecrated their union; it blest them and they *were* blest! Yes! the rapturous sensation, the

perfect conviction, that they were now exclusively bound to each other; that neither must cherish a thought which the other might not share; that all their future happiness or woe would be in common—*was* bliss! It was not expressed by the tumultuous overflowings of rapture, but by the deep and sacred silence of happiness; it shone in the lustre of their eyes, and was enthroned in the tranquil seriousness of their countenances;—no impassioned exclamation sullied its purity, or shadowed it with the dross of this world.

That enthusiasm of which Lord Montague had so often doubted the existence, now irradiated the manner of Isadora to himself with its brightest beams; it emanated from a heart entirely devoted to him, with an ardour and a purity that at once delighted and softened him.

Grosvenor and the happy Lady Anne are frequent witnesses of the happiness of the Earl and Countess, to which their own is not inferior. Grosvenor still finds

a guide, a counsellor, a friend, in the Earl; when a cloud shades his brow, his friends remember the dangers from which Lord Montague preserved him, and rejoice that this cloud is the only memorial that such weakness ever existed.

The Reverend Mr. Flash no longer disgraces the church of England; his detection by Lord Montague was soon perfectly known, and his diocesan no longer permitted him to shroud his iniquity in that sacred garb which he had rendered impure and unholy.

He accompanied his patron Lord Percival and the unfortunate Lady Clervaux to Ireland; there, the united extravagance of the trio soon exhausted those resources obtained by the most fraudulent practices, and, unable to accommodate themselves to their narrow circumstances, they defrauded the unsuspecting tradesmen with whom they dealt of sums to a vast amount, and absconded with them into France.

At this period the action for damages

brought by Sir Thomas Clervaux against Lord Percival Lorn, came to issue; the award was heavy, and Lord Percival had only to congratulate himself on having escaped from England before that award was made.

Lady Clervaux sought in vain for that happiness which she had promised to herself in the society of Lord Percival Lorn. He refused to marry her; and notwithstanding this, restrained her with mad jealousy from associating with those people, who were yet willing to admit her into their houses, lest she should forsake him, as she had done that husband, with whom she had lived in honour, and, as far as she was capable of enjoying it, in happiness.

But all his caution was vain; Lady Clervaux, abhorring the tyranny that was exercised on her, escaped from him, and threw herself under the protection of a French *petit-maître,* whose desire of possessing her was induced merely by

the wish of having in his keeping the prettiest Englishwoman in France.

With this Frenchman she still exists, compelled to accommodate herself to his fantastical humours, and to indulge the continual caprices, with which he torments her. Always regretting that home and that country she forsook, harrowed by the frightful images which an accusing conscience presents to her, she drags on a wretched existence, incapable of deriving enjoyment from the present, and loathing the prospect of the future: already, in early youth, bowed down by the pressure of sickness and decay; almost wishing for death as the only means of escape from the evils that harass her, yet dreading it as the certain precursor of horrors of which she cannot even form a conception, earth does not present a more pitiable object, or a more dreadful illustration of those misfortunes, and that punishment, which *Deism* always induces.

Lord Percival Lorn, irritated by the

desertion of the woman whom he had seduced, sat down to play with his friend Mr. Flash. A slight contradiction was given; Lord Percival was enraged; they came to high words; they met with the instruments of death ready primed, and firing at the same instant, at the same moment were called to render up their great account.

Dreadful contemplation! the mind shrinks from it in horror!

Miss Wodehouse always continues the same deifier of common-sense she has ever been: the wise laugh at her, and the illiterate fear her; but she is perfectly harmless, and an admirable wife to Surrey.

He is the same good-natured simpleton we have ever known him; always ready to tell one of "his confounded good stories," he is never so happy as when he can persuade some one whom he estimates highly, to listen to him. Without any exalted capacity for happiness, he passes through life in perfect

content with himself and all around him, and only dissatisfied lately with the information that a person deep in the secret of things of that kind, has volunteered to him, that five-inch waists, the same quantity of shirt-collar, low-crowned hats, and buckram attitudes, will soon be speedily out of vogue, for they have actually got on the persons of vile, plebeian tradesmen and mechanics, making it impossible for the gentlemen of Bond-street to patronise them any longer; "confoundedly unlucky," Surrey says to his wife; "nothing can be more becoming to *me*; not that I have so ill-formed a neck and forehead as many of them, either!"

Lord Montague still continues to observe and to speculate on man, but it is with a pleasure on which he had never dared to calculate. He appreciates life in a manner totally different from that which he had formerly adopted; and, as he once understood every trifling figure that composes the aggregate of

human misery, so now he is attaining to the just estimation of human happiness.

Beloved with a devotedness of feeling intense as that which exists in his own bosom, Lord Montague no longer doubts the affection of Isadora. In gratitude and reverence he adores that God who gave him so bright a star to enliven his path through life, and to shine cheeringly on the evening of his days.

THE END.

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